GUIDE TO THE MR13 FELLAHIN FILE

[The MR13 Fellahin file is concerned with the Arabic-speaking Egyptian agriculturalists living along the Nile. The file contains nine sources, all of which are in English. Most of the material dates from the first half of the twentieth century, with some coming from the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the file covers a time span of about 75 years. The areas in which these Fellahin live are called Upper Egypt (i.e., the South, Aswan Province, etc.), Middle Egypt, and Lower Egypt (i.e., the North, the Nile Delta, etc.). There is some local variation between the regions.

The basic sources in the file are 1: Ammar, which analyzes the social and psychological aspects of education in Silwa, a village in Aswan Province where Ammar grew up; 2: Blackman, a general ethnography of the Upper Egyptian Fellahin with very detailed and precise information; and 3: Ayrout, by a Syrian Catholic priest, which is a study of ethos and psychology in Lower and Middle Egypt. In addition, 4: Walker is a description of folk medicinal practices in the late 19th century; 8: Schaefer is a description and analysis of peasant songs, and 9: Klunzinger is a description of religious and secular festivals and ceremonies in Upper Egypt by a nineteenth century physician.

The MR13 Fellahin file contains a good deal of cultural data and should be sufficient for must research purposes. Researchers should be aware of the time foci involved, and also of the possibility of regional variation in the culture. Most of the sources are concerned with the Fellahin of Upper Egypt. The file was processed between 1962 and 1964 and contains no special marking decisions.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

562 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are
required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide
the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312
from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village
quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [578]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [665]

FOREWORD

The "Fellaheen" of Egypt are the oldest peasantry in the world. History teaches us this, and also that the Valley of the Nile shows the oldest records of civilised and cultural life. 101

Throughout thousands of years our peasantry has kept its customs, habits, character, and type in a remarkably steady manner. 183.

It is still essentially what it was in the far-distant Pharaonic days : one of the two main pillars of Egypt's wealth and well-being. The other, as Herodotus remarked long ago, is the river Nile.

A great deal has been said about the Fellah, particularly during the last few decades, and there is a vast amount of literature about Egypt and its people. Seldom, however, has a writer devoted his main interest to the study of the Egyptian peasant as a human type, looking at him, his character, his culture and traditions, with sympathy, objectivity, and an unbiased view. 114

The present book fills this gap in the literature about our country. We owe its author our sincerest thanks. 000

The more one really studies the Fellaheen of Egypt, the more one will discard a lot of mistaken ideas about their character. Now that the country has come to a turning-point of its history, it is essential that its people as a whole should be fully aware of the tremendous task ahead of them. A complete and intimate collaboration among all classes, a particularly sympathetic understanding — and not just a platonic one — of their peasantry by the upper class and landowners, is the basis and most important element of this patriotic cooperation. The "Fellah", whether as a small — and how small! — landowner or as an agri-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN OLIGARCHY

In Egyptian politics and society the peasantry has always constituted the primal mass, and as it were the raw material; the foundation, almost the sub-soil, on which government and society are based. This double structure must now be considered before we can look more closely at the fellah's way of life. EF 565

The façade of contemporary Egypt, modern and composite in style, is represented by the country's three great cities with their striking, many-sided activity. There is Cairo, with its two universities (having nearly 20,000 students), its palaces and museums, its scientific institutions, its international congresses and winter lecture-courses. There is Alexandria, with its busy port and Cotton Exchange, its foreign institutions, its fashionable beaches and esplanade. There is Port Said, gateway to the East, with the Suez Canal and all its traffic. These cities compose a sort of triptych, in which large and varied groups standing side by side conceal the fundamental Egypt, just as the stones of a mosaic hide the grey cement which supports them. EF 369

Just as it was once usual to speak of 'All the Russias', so today, from a social point of view, one might well talk of Egypt in the plural. There is no single Egyptian people, in the usual literary or historical sense of this word, but only a seething assemblage of the most varied types, which has no real correspondence with the country itself. Neither is there a true peasant community, but only a homogeneous mass of peasants bound to the soil and isolated in their villages. EF 101

3

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

NOTES

113 The notes are those of the Second French Edition of 1942 (Horus, Cairo), except where marked *T*. These are annotations by the translator.

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1. HISTOIRE DE LA NATION EGYPTIENNE, 7 vols, Paris 1931-6. published under the auspices of King Fuad I, and edited by G. Hanotaux.

PRÉCIS DE L'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, various authors, 4 vols, Cairo 1932-5.

L'EGYPTE ANCIENNE, MODERNE, CONTEMPORAINE, P. Henaut, S.J., Cairo, 1935.

L'EGYPTE, APERÇU HISTORIQUE ET GÉOGRAPHIQUE, Cairo 1926.

1(a) *T*.—The standard works in English are :
Cromer (Earl of) : MODERN EGYPT, 2 vols, London 1908.
Lloyd (Lord Lloyd of Dolobran) : EGYPT SINCE CROMER, London 1934.

[101] 2. FELLAH, masc. sing., originally one who tills or ploughs the soil ; masc. plural FELLAHEEN ; fem. sing. FELLAHA.

3. DÉSCRIPTION DE L'EGYPTE, Paris, 1821-9.
These volumes comprise a valuable collection of detailed observations and researches, made in Egypt during the Napoleonic Expedition.

4. Jean Brunhes : LA GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1925.

P. Vidal de la Blacho : PRINCIPES DE GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

Lucien Febvre : LE TERRE ET L'EVOLUTION HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

175 Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect
170 the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of
144 the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large
53 numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of
them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have
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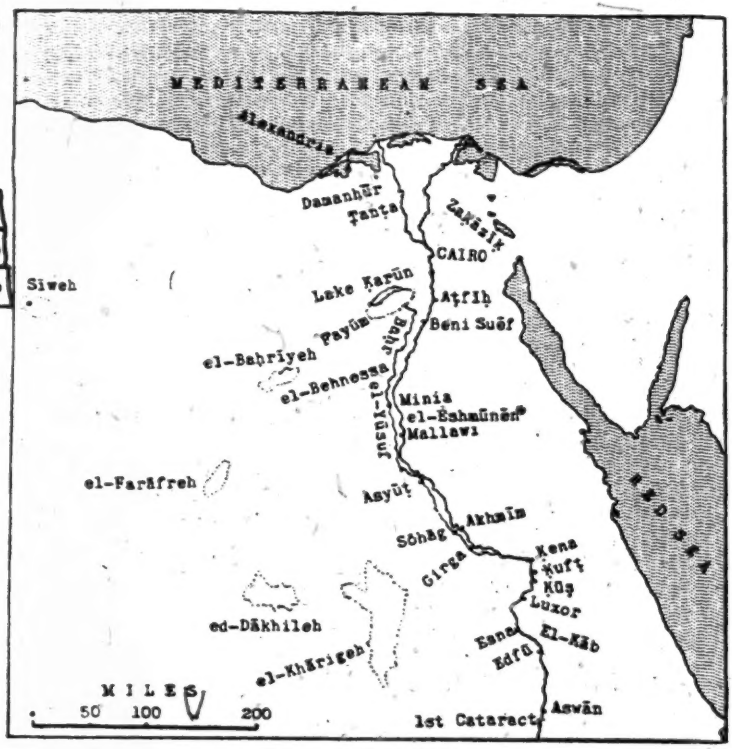

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

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married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

7: Riad E-4.5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

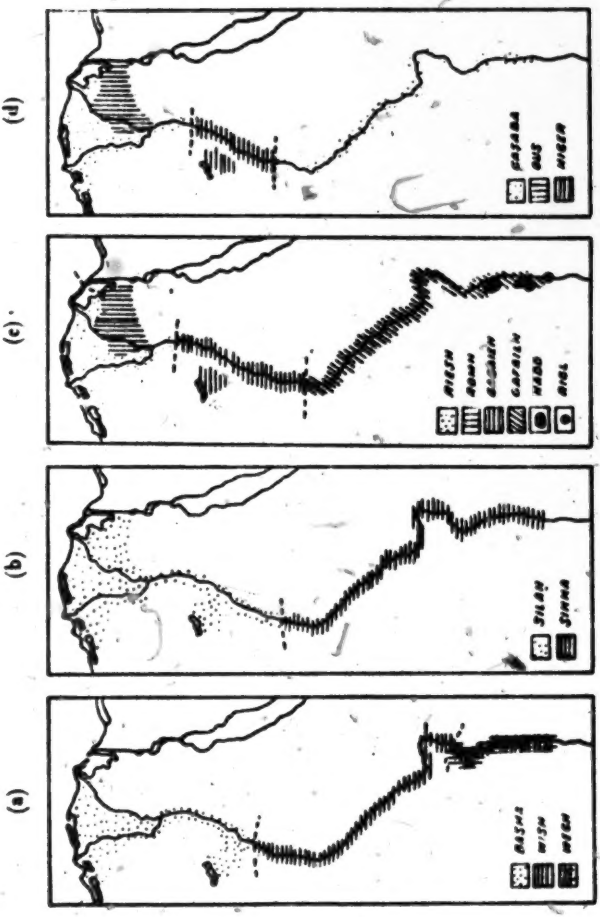

Fig. 1. Appellations of Plough Parts.

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7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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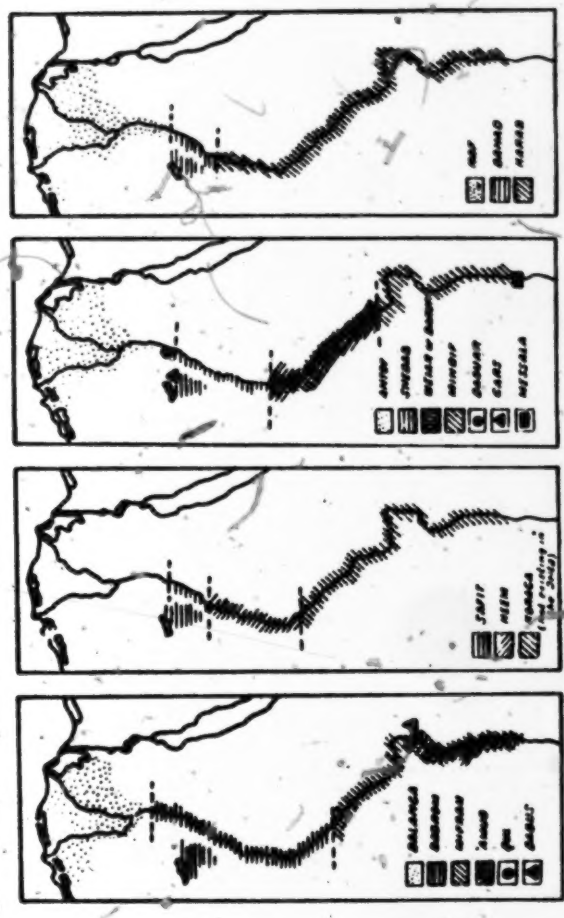

Fig. 8. Appellations of Plough Parts.

7: Riad E-4, 5. (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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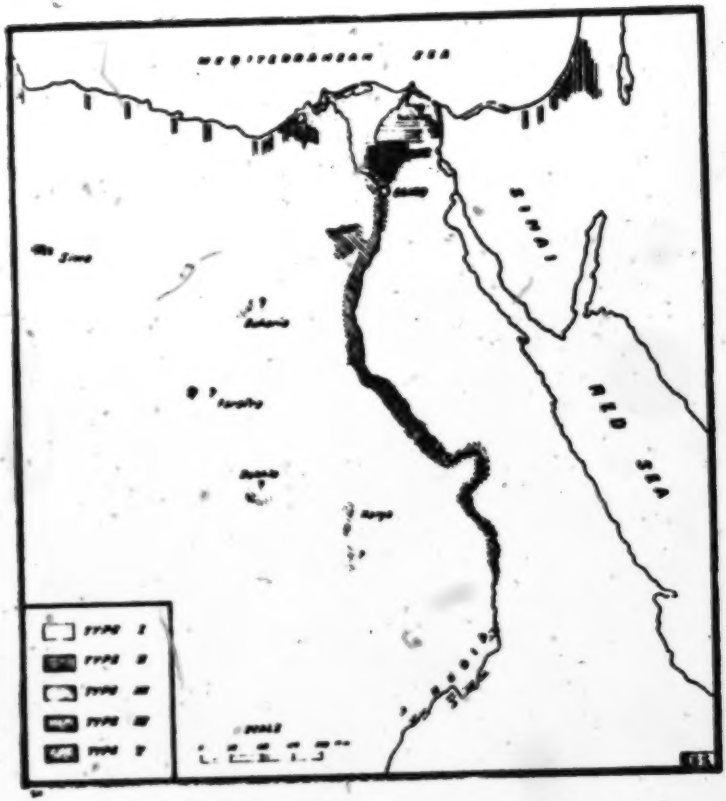

Fig. 3. Regional Distribution of Plough Types in Egypt.

RETROSPECT

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The basic plough types just described are not exclusive to Egypt. We have already seen that plough type II has a wide diffusion in North Africa and the Middle East. It may also exist in Tibit, if the drawings reproduced by Ratzel [1] are true. But already in Tibet we see another

[1] Ratzel, Vol. III, p. 384.

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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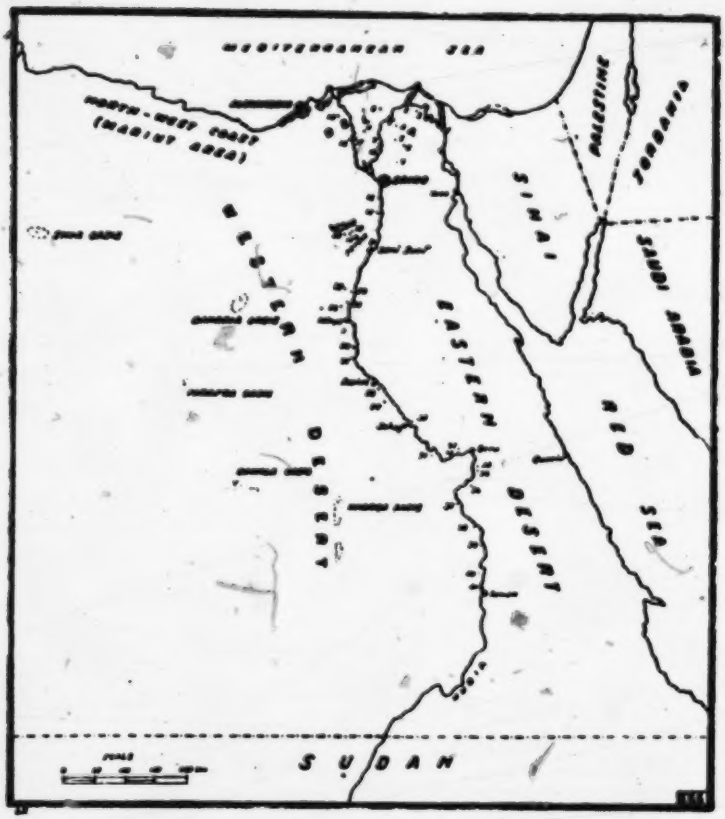

Fig. 4. Names of Localities where Studies on the plough were carried out.

[103]

1. Qantara West.
2. Genemia.
3. Bu-rat.
4. Nub.
5. Ibrahimia.
6. 'Ezbet Maher.
7. Bilbies.
8. Bicala.
9. Zefta.
10. Sa'ad Pacha.
11. Shony.
12. Mishla.
13. Kamshush.
14. Sanhur.
15. Netma.
16. Tammu.
17. 'Ayat.
18. Fidimin.
19. Sinero.
20. Zeid.
21. Man'aris.
22. Edab'iy.
23. Beni Mazar.
24. Golosna.
25. Shosha.
26. Mallawi.
27. Garf Serhan.
28. Nazlet Abdalla.
29. Aulad Mohamed.
30. El-'Ezbi.
31. Aulad imran.
32. Abu Mena.
33. Essaberat.
34. Kinan.
35. Harragia.
36. El-'Ammari.
37. Nouasir.
38. Kelh.
39. Ramadi-South.
40. Ezulan.
41. Beharif Ja.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. I. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

5. *T.*—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrîzi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). [133 134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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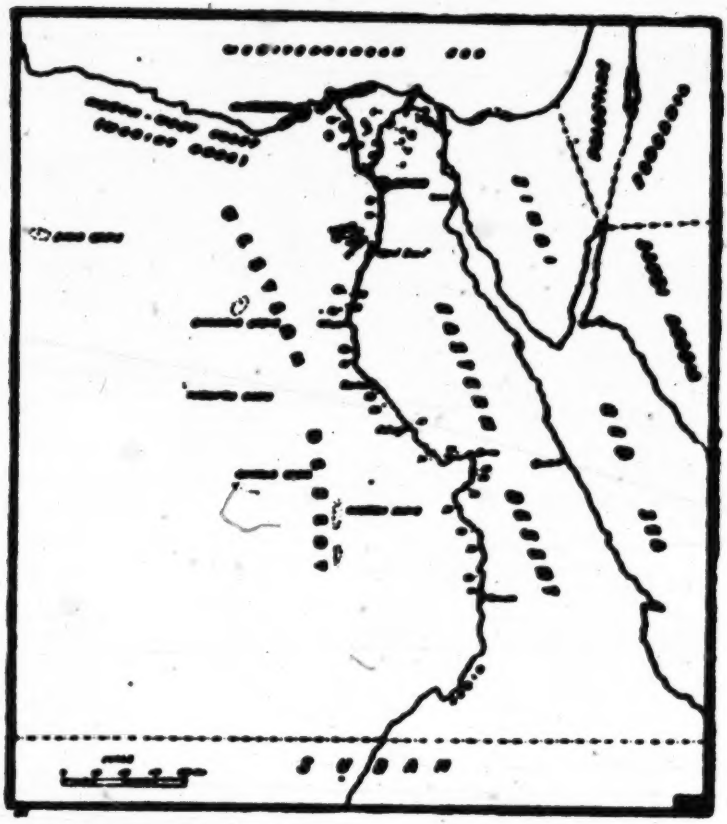

Fig. 4. Names of Localities where Studies on the plough were carried out.

1. Qustaw West.
2. Gomaim.
3. Bayat.
4. Nub.
5. Rashimin.
6. 'Kabat Nahar.
7. Bilbies.
8. Hindu.
9. Zeiba.
10. Sa'ad Pasha.
11. Shany.
12. Mishla.
13. Kamshish.
14. Sanbar.
15. Rotma.
16. Tammo.
17. 'Ayat.
18. Fidimin.
19. Sinoro.
20. Zaid.
21. Bani'aris.
22. Ezbab'iy.
23. Beni Mazar.
24. Gebrana.
25. Nbwaha.
26. Mallawi.
27. Garf Sorbaw.
28. Nazlet Abdalla.
29. Ashad Mohammed.
30. El-'Ezbi.
31. Ashad Amran.
32. Abu Mansa.
33. Kombarist.
34. Kimma.
35. Sharagin.
36. El-'Ammari.
37. Nazzair.
38. Kelh.
39. Bamadi-South.
40. Brahma.
41. Bahari Ia.

[103]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Appellations Regionally Used to Different Parts of the Native Plough in Egypt.

Place of Observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	Handle grip	Beam
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (2)	Bazha	Silah	Romh		Maqbad	Ous
Genemia (2) (1)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Busrat (3) (1)	•	•	•	—		Asaba
Nub (3)	•	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Gos
Ibrahimia (1)				Gafiez	•	•
'Ezbet-Maher (1)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bilbies (2)				Afiez	Abda	Ous
Bilbies (3)				—	•	•
Ibrahimia (1) (—)					Gabda	Gos
'Ezbet-Maher (1) ( )				—	•	•
Bilbies (2) ( )	•	•	•		Abda	Ous
Bilbies (3) ( )						
Bilbies (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Bilbies (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Central Delta :						
Bicala (2)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Bicala (2) (+) I)		•	•	—	•	—
Zefta (2)	Basha	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Asaba
Sa'ad Pasha (1) ( )	•	•	•	—	•	Ous
Shony (2)	•	•	Riesh	—	Ieyd	Asaba
Mishla (1)	•	•	Raiash	—	'Oukza	•
Kamshush (3)	•	•	•	—	Rimh	•
Kamshush (3) (+)	•	Lisan el 'asfur	•	—	•	Ous(— —)
Western Delta :						
Sanhur (3)	•	Silah	Riesh	—	—	Gasabi
Netma (1)	•	•	•	—	'Oukza	Asaba
Middle Egypt :						
Tamma (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	Abda	Asaba
'Ayat (2) (+)	•	•	Gabaien	—	•	Higr
Fidimin (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	—	•
Sinero (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	Masnad	•
Zeid (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Man'aris (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	'Ubad	•
Edab'iy (1) (+)	Wish	•	•	—	Gabda	Gasaba
Beni Mazar (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Golosna (3) (+)	•	Sikka	•	—	•	•
Shosha (1) (+)	•	Silah	•	—	•	•

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Place of observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	handle grip	Beam
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Wish	Sikke	Gafaien	Ṭog	Gatada	Gaṣaba
Garf Serhan (2) (+)	•	•	•		•	•
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	•	•	Dafaien	Dibel	Yadd	•
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	Dog	Gabda	•
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Ṭog	Babba	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	Dabba	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	Gabda	•
Essaberiat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	Dibel	•	•
Ḥarragia (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	Wagh	•	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Wish	•	•	•	Magbad	•
Kelh (3) (+)	Wigh	•	Ḥadd	•	•	•
Ramedi South (1) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	•	•	•
Benban (3) (+)	Wagh	•	Ḥadd	•	•	•
Baḥarif (3) (+)	Sikke	•	Rigil	•	Yadd	
Palestine :						
Southern area (+) (=) (++)	Arḍiya	Ḥaseem	Romin		Ḥamama	Aou'
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) (=) (+)	El-Layta	Sikka	Seluqina	—	Qarraqa	Raqaba

(1) Ploughs observed by the author.
(2) Ploughs described by some students of the author (faculty of Arts, Ain-Shams Univ.).
(3) Ploughs described by H. A. Winkler pp. 153-158 (see references below).
(+) Double handle plough.
(=) Curved beam plough.
(+) One animal plough (usually garden plough). [241]
(++) Wheeled plough (usually used in sandy areas).
(+ I) Wheeled plough (usually for vegetables).
(= =) The first part of the beam, which is attached to the share is called Wasle, while the forked fore part of the beam is called Arish, and the whole is called Ous. see Winkler, H. A., p. 154.

Transcription :

ء	همزه	b	ح	b	ح	Sh	ش	s	ص		
d	ض	T	ط	'	ع	'	غ	q	ق		

[104]

This Sign – on any vowel means elongation of the vowel.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [788]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbîye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

[103] [131]

Dināre 'alet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarraǧ 'al-bagūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

40. 41.

539x 852 304

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

66.

A Connoisseur's Judgment.

539x
103

A sailor's song about the girls of three villages in Middle Egypt.

El-mulāḥ fiṭ-Ṭarfaye,
wir-radi fil-Kufūr.
tif'agbum bil-'aṣāyib,
ya banāt el-Mēmūn.

The pretty ones live in Ṭarfāye
And the ugly ones in el-Kufūr.
Ye wear your head-kerchiefs so daintily,
Ye maidens of el-Mēmūn.

1. eṭ-Ṭarfāye: a place on the west shore of the Nile, a little south of el-Bedreshēn, which place is known to all visitors of Saqqāra.

2. el-Kufūr, literally: "the villages". According to Maḥmūd, these mean seven places situated very near together, on the west shore, south of Ṭarfāye, but his idea of them seemed very vague.

4. el-Mēmūn: a place, about seven miles south of el-Wasṭa, the station from which the railroad branches off to the Fayūm.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

128.

An Inquisitive Questioner.

X539

A man addresses a woman, who is busy preparing doves.

Yalli gōzik fil-Minye,
dabḥa-l-ḥamām-da-l-mīn?
Dabḥā-l-ḥabībi willi šerīki mīn?

"O thou whose husband is in Minye,
For whom killest thou these doves?"
"I am killing them for my beloved, and whom does it further concern?"

1. "In Minye" is used in the same sense as in the Ṣa'īd", meaning: far away. Compare No. 20, l. 7. Minye is the well-known town in southern Middle Egypt.

[103]

3. Literally: "And who is my partner" (that I should be accountable to him)?

×539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

[501] 2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabîye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

[103] 4. 5. eš-šar'ye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzî') and Ṭanṭa.

[114] 8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

LIST OF ARABIC WORDS
EMPLOYED IN THE TEXT

104

A[1]

abb (pl. *abahāt*), father; *Yā abūi!* O my father! an exclamation of distress or pain, 119, 226
aḥsan, better; *aḥsan khāliṣ*, much better, 123
aiwa, yes, 83
akh, alas! fie!, 225 f.
akhkh (pl. *ikhwāt*, *ikhwān*[2]), brother; *Yā akhūi!* O my brother!, 123
atl, tamarisk, 205

B

bakīyeh, el-, what remains over, 114
ballāṣ (pl. *balālīṣ*), water-pot, 142, 153
barakeh, blessing, healing virtue, good luck, 33, 65, 99 f., and *passim*
barūkeh, lucky coin, 99
bashkūr, iron rod for moving bread in the oven, 164
battaw, bread made from *dura*-flour and resembling oatcake, 65, 163
buhāk, fumes, 53
būṣ, dry maize-stalks, 27 f., 148, 150, 192

D

darābukkeh, pottery drum, 85, 168
dastūr, permission, 229
dikkeh (pl. *dikak*), wooden bench with back and arms, 27
dukk, tattoo! (imperat. masc. sing. of *dakk*, he has tattooed), 51
dura, maize, 39, 163 f., 175, 182, 192, 310

Ḍ

A strong palatal.

ḍufr, nail, claw; possibly 'horn' of a cerastes (horned viper), 66

E

ēy, what, 120

F

fakrūn, tortoise, 194, *n.* 2
farrāsh, sweeper, 248, *n.* 1, 249
Fātiheh, el-, the first chapter of the Ḳorān, 212, 252
faṭīr, sweet pastry, 175 f.
feddān, acre, 38 f.
fellāḥ (fem. *fellāḥeh*, pl. *fellāḥīn*), cultivator, peasant, *passim*
fi, in, 114
fiḳīh (pl. *fuḳahā*), person who recites the Ḳorān and who is more or less versed in the religion and law of Islām, 109, 111 f., 114 f., 117 ff., 172, 256, 259, 293, 308 f.
fiṭāmeh, act of weaning; used metaphorically of the last time of irrigating a field of *dura*, 175, 177
fulān, so and so, 118
fūweh, madder, 194

G

gallabīyeh (pl. *galālīb*), a long blouse, often made of white or blue cotton cloth, 32, 73, 88, 187, 285 f.
garūt, an implement used in pottery-making, 149 f.
gebel, mountain, 246
gināb, excellency; *gināb es-sitt*, honoured lady, 69
ginn, class of supernatural beings, 68 f., 227

GH

A very guttural r.

ghiṭās, baptism by immersion; *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, 263, 298

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[1] For the pronunciation of modern Egyptian Arabic vowels and consonants see J. S. Willmore, *The Spoken Arabic of Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 1 ff.
[2] *Ikhwān* means 'brethren,' 'associates.'

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

•104

H

A smooth but very strong guttural aspirate.

ḥagar, stone, 203
ḥalfa, coarse kind of grass, 248
ḥamr, reddish clay used in pottery-making, 145
ḥaseneh, charity, 65, 118
ḥayāt, life; *El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*, May what remains over be in your life, 114
ḥelbeh, fenugreek, 78
ḥenna, red dye made from the leaves of the shrub *Lawsonia inermis*, 57, 87 f.
ḥigāb, charm, amulet, 71
ḥirbāyeh, chameleon, 66

I

iblīz,[1] mud of the Nile left behind after the inundation, 62
ibrīḳ (pl. *ibārīḳ*), ewer with long, curved spout, 78
iddī, give!; *iddīnī*, give me, 118
ism, name; *Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*, In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, 82
iswid, black, 206

Ḳ

kaḥk, cakes, 115, 118
kammūn, cumin, 206
keda, thus, 83
kenīseh, church, 106
kishk, wheat mixed with milk, made into small balls, and dried in the sun,[2] 89, 222 f.
kisweh, rug, carpet, 264, *n.* 1, 265
Kiyakh, fourth month in the Coptic year, 234
koḥl, antimony, 59, 79 f., 284
kunāfeh, fine macaroni, vermicelli, 175 f.
kurbāg, whip made of hide, 131
kūz (pl. *kīzān*), mug, 75, 167

Ḳ

Deep guttural k.

ḳāḍi, judge; one who draws up marriage contracts and who arranges divorces, 43, 92, 191 f.
ḳādūs (pl. *ḳawādīs*), special kind of pottery jar, several of which are attached by cords to the water-wheel,[3] 101
ḳafaṣ (pl. *aḳfāṣ*), basket or cage made of palm-ribs, 160 f., 165, 304
ḳamḥ, wheat, corn, 172 f.
ḳandīl (pl. *ḳanādīl*), old-fashioned saucer-lamp, 237
ḳarīn (fem. *ḳarīneh*, pl. *aḳrān*), personality born with each human being and of the same sex, pp. 54, 64 ff., 69 ff. and *passim*
ḳibleh, prayer-niche in a mosque, 250
ḳulleh (pl. *ḳulal*), earthen water-bottle, 140, 149, 151 f., 167, 231 f., 237

KH

Pronounced like ch *in Scottish* loch.

khāliṣ, much, very, exceedingly, 123
Khamasīn, the period immediately following the Coptic festival of Easter Sunday and terminating on Whit Sunday—an interval of forty-nine days,[4] 261
khubz, wheaten bread, 64 f., 163
khud, take!, 118

L

lāzimeh, obligatory gift, a special kind of charm, 199
līf, fibre from the trunk of the palm-tree, 161

M

mā, what, that which, 220 f.
mabsūṭ, pleased, 58
maḥalleh, implement on which wool is wound after it is spun, 73
maḥāreh, kind of shell, 203

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[1] Derived from πηλός, according to E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–), vol. i, p. 248.
[2] See also E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. ii, p. 223, n. 1.
[3] See p. 171, and E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 26.
[4] See E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 222 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

LIST OF ARABIC WORDS

maḳṭaf (pl. *maḳāṭif*), large basket woven from palm-leaves, 65, 155 f., 304
malāk (pl. *malāyikeh*), angel, 78
malḳaf (pl. *malāḳif*), ventilator on roof of house, 280
mandareh, reception room, 27
maṣṭabeh (pl. *maṣāṭib*), brick bench, 32, 242, 281
mikḥaleh, bottle for *koḥl*, 59
mughreh, red ochre, 146
moiyeh, water; *moiyet el-malāyikeh*, water of the angels, 78
mubārakīn, blessed ones; used euphemistically of the *'afārīt*, 229
mueddin, officiant (often blind) who chants the call to prayer from the mosque, 31, 172, 308 f.
muḳarraṣ, made into little cakes; descriptive of the way in which a boy's hair is cut by the barber before he undergoes circumcision, 87
mūlid (pl. *mawālid*), festival, 81, 83, 244 ff., 252 ff.; *Mūlid en-Nebi*, Festival of the Prophet—*i.e.*, the annual celebration of the Prophet's birthday, 252
mūṣ, very finely chopped straw, 149

N

nāb, double tooth, 66
nabbūt (pl. *nabābīt*), single-stick, 129, 131, 133
nadam, single-membrane drum, 265, 267
nahār, day; *Nahārak sa'īd*, Good day!, 120
nāi, kind of flute, 167
nebi, prophet, 79, 220 f.
nōrag, threshing-machine, 173
nūr, light; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262

R

rashād, nasturtium, 204
rashteh, macaroni cooked in milk, 175 f.
raṭl, a weight of rather more than 1 lb., 64
rōḥ, soul, 110 f., 118, 237

S

104

sabt, sabbath; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262
sādif, implement used in pottery-making, 152
sa'īd, happy; *Nahārak sa'īd*, Good day!, 120
semn, clarified butter used in cooking, 167, 195
sibākh, earth from rubbish mounds used as a fertilizer, 156
sibḥeh, rosary, 114
sitt, lady, 69, 118

Ṣ

A very strong sibilant pronounced well back in the mouth.

ṣabī, lad, 51
ṣabr, aloes, 116, 242
ṣalla, bless!; *Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*, Bless the Prophet, 79, 220 f.
ṣughaiyar, little, small, 259, 298
ṣulḥeh, peace-making feast held by persons who have appeased the sheikh or sheikhs by whom they were possessed, 186 f., 199 f.

SH

shā, he hath willed; *Mā shā Allāh*, What God willeth is, 220 f.
shādūf (pl. *shawādīf*), water-hoist, 170 f., 175, 306 f.
shagareh, tree; designation of special tattoo pattern, 52, 55
shahīd (pl. *shuhadā*), martyr, 121
shemm, (act of) smelling; *Shemm en-Nesīm*, the Smelling of the Zephyr, a festival celebrated in April on the first day of the *Khamasīn*,[1] 33, 261
shems, sun, 298

T

tāni, other, second, 63
ta'āla, come!, 51, 124
tibn, finely chopped straw, 149
tōb, outer garment worn by women out of doors, 105
tūtia, sulphate of zinc, 203

[1] See p. 318, note 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ṭ

A strong palatal.

ṭafl, yellow clay used in pottery-making, 146, 151

ṭala', going up; visit (generally weekly) to the cemetery, 117, 263, 298 f., 300

ṭarfā, tamarisk, 188; *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā*, stone of the tamarisk, 203

ṭīn, earth, clay, 62

ṭulū' esh-shems, sunrise, 298

U

ukht (pl. *ikhwāt*), sister; also a personality born simultaneously with each human being, but distinct from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*, 64, 74 ff., 186 f.

W

walad, child, boy, 63

walī, saint,[1] 244

Y

Yā, O (introducing the vocative), 119 f., 151

yōm, day; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262; *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, 263, 298

Z

zār, ceremony performed by and for persons possessed by a sheikh or sheikhs, 198 ff.

zarībeh, enclosure for sheep, goats, or cattle, 222

zēy, likeness; *Ēy-zēyak*, How are you?, 120

zikr, religious dance, 255 f., 258

zīr (pl. *ziyār* or *izyār*), large pottery jar in which the household water is stored, 75, 137 f., 149, 151, 153, 220

zummāreh, double reed-pipe with a drone, 167, 172, 308

A strong guttural of the same nature as ḥ, and peculiar to the Semitic languages.

'afrīt (fem. *'afrīteh*, pl. *'afārīt*), a supernatural being supposed to be made of fire and to dwell underground, *passim* and especially 69 f., 177, 223, 227 ff.; summoned by a magician, 193; ghost, 111, 225, 237

'arīf, cantor in a Coptic church, 125 ff., 234

'arūseh, bride; *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'bride of the corn,' 172 f.

'īd, festival; *el-'Īd es-Ṣughaiyar*, the Little Festival, 259, 298; *el-'Īd el-Kibīr*, the Great Festival, 259 f., 298

'irḳ (pl. *'urūḳ*), root; *'urūḳ el-fūweh*, roots of madder, 194

'omdeh, headman of a village, 225, 235 f., 269

[1] See also E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 289.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

GLOSSARY

C
F
104

The Arabic words are spelt so as to give English readers as close an idea as possible of the correct pronunciation. *Q* is put for the Arabic *qaf*, almost inaudible in Cairo and the Delta, but usually sounded in Upper Egypt like a hard *g*.

areiq —A water-pot with a spout, holding about $^1/_8$ gallon.
'asha —evening meal.
ardeb —198 litres or $4^1/_2$ cantars.
'arif —Coptic cantor or lay clerk, often a blind man.
'arussa —bride or engaged girl ; or a doll.
Al-Azhar —the ancient Islamic University of Cairo, founded A.D. 988.
balad —town, country, village.
ballas —large round two-eared jar, in which women carry water on their heads.
bandar —provincial capital.
barari —dried-up marshes.
bur —uncultivated or desert lands.
cantar —about 100 lbs. (of cotton)
daira —office of an estate.
dekka —bench.
'ezba —village, privately owned, for the workers of an estate.
fass —hoe.
feddan —a little more than one acre.
fitama —weaning.
gallabiya —long outer robe of men.
gamoossa —female water-buffalo.
garuf —winnowing-fork of wood.
ghada —midday meal.
ghaffir —watchman.
hagg —one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.
halla —metal cooking-plate.
ilzamiya —public elementary school.
kassabiya —leveller.
kirat —one twenty-fourth of a feddan.

C F 104 *kohl* —antimony, a black eye-salve, at once decorative and hygienic.
kuz —drinking-mug: often a tin with a handle.
kuttab —village school of old Koranic type.
lifa —palm-tree fibre.
libda —felt skullcap.
mâmur —chief constable.
mâzun —religious officer, who records marriages, divorces, etc.
mahr —dowry to the bride.
markaz —police district or its headquarters.
mastaba —a raised seat built against a wall.
mawwal —erotic song.
milaya —large black veil for women.
mihrat —plough.
moawen —assistant to the chief constable of a *markaz*.
mudir —governor of a province.
mudiriya —province, rather like an English county.
mulid —birthday feast of a Moslem saint.
nabbut —long stick or cudgel.
nazir —superintendent of an estate.
norag —threshing machine.
'omda —head-man of a village or small town.
oke —about 2 lbs. 12 oz.
okiya —one twelfth of a *rotl* = 1½ oz.
rayess —foreman, overseer.
rotl —one hundredth of a *cantar* = about 1 lb.
saqia —water-raising machine with wheels and a chain of buckets.
sarraf —tax-collector.
sebakh —natural manure
semad —chemical manure.
shaduf —water-raising machine with a long pole, worked by hand.
sheikh —old man or notable.
shoona —a large enclosed area for storing cotton or grain.
tabliya —very low table for meals.
taqiya —calico skull-cap.
tisht —large basin or shallow tub.
wakf —a peculiar form of entail or trust.
zahhafa —leveller.

114 inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

104 The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ج by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

114 The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the 128 indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Place of observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	handle grip	Beam
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Wish	Sikke	Gafaien	Tog	Gabda	Gaqaba
Garf Serban (2) (+)	•	•	•		•	•
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	•	•	Dafaien	Dibel	Yadd	•
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	Dog	Gabda	•
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Tog	Babba	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	Dabba	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	Gabda	•
Ezzaberiat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	Dibel	•	•
Harragia (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	Wagh	•	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Wish	•	•	•	Maghad	•
Kelh (3) (+)	Wigh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Ramedi South (1) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	•	•	•
Benban (3) (+)	Wagh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Baharif (3) (+)	Sikke	•	Rigil	•	Yadd	
Palestine :						
Southern area (2) (=) (+)	Arliya	Hasceem	Romin		Hamama	Koo'
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) (=) (+)	El-Layta	Sikka	Seluqina	—	Qarraqa	Raqaba

(1) Ploughs observed by the author.
(2) Ploughs described by some students of the author (faculty of Arts, Ain-Shams Univ.).
(3) Ploughs described by H. A. Winkler pp. 153-158 (see references below).
(+) Double handle plough.
(=) Curved beam plough.
(+) One animal plough (usually garden plough). [241]
(++) Wheeled plough (usually used in sandy areas).
(+) I) Wheeled plough (usually for vegetables).
(= =) The first part of the beam, which is attached to the share is called Wasle, while the forked fore part of the beam is called Arish, and the whole is called Ous. see Winkler, H. A., p. 154.

Transcription :

' ء همزه	h ح	ḫ خ	Sh ش	ṣ ص		
ḍ ض	T ط	' ع	G غ	q ق		

[104]

This Sign – on any vowel means elongation of the vowel.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣir. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my inform-
115 ants was a Būṣîri (man of Abūṣir), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa''āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa''āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhîm es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old
124 rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All
115 the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either
[104] not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus,
[194] I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasye near Beni-Suēf.

Fellahin MR13
Egyptian Fellahin

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Identification

The modern Egyptians number about 20,000,000, nearly all concentrated on the 13,000 square miles (out of a total of 363,000) which can be irrigated by the Nile. The language is Arabic, and the people regard themselves as Arabs. The country was conquered from the Byzantine Empire in 639 A.D. by the Arabs, and until 969 was ruled by the Eastern or Abbasid Caliphate as a province with a governor. In the latter year it was conquered by the Fatimite Caliphate of North Africa, which shifted its capital to Cairo. It was during this period, in the middle of the 11th century, that Egypt first underwent a mass invasion of Bedouins from Arabia, many of whom settled down in the Nile valley, mixed with the indigenous peasantry, and brought about the substantial acculturation to the Arab way of life. From 1171 to 1252 Egypt was ruled by the Ayyubid dynasty, who owed nominal allegiance to the Abbasid Caliphate. From 1252 to 1517 came the rule of the Mamaluke dynasties, who had their capital at Cairo and also acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasid caliphs. In the latter year Egypt fell to the Turks, and was ruled by pashas from Constantinople. In 1879 began a period of Anglo-French and British control, which was succeeded by national independence in 1923. Except for the small Coptic sect of Christians, the Egyptians are Moslems in religion.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with plow cultivation, irrigation, and two annual crops. Water is lifted into irrigation canals by man-operated wellsweeps [shaduf] and animal-operated water wheels. The staple crops are wheat, barley, maize, sorghum, and rice [the last mainly in Lower Egypt]. Some broom-corn millet and pearl millet are also grown, but no oats. Other cultivated plants are exceedingly numerous. Legumes and forage crops include alfalfa, broad beans, chick peas, chickling vetch, clover, hyacinth beans, lentils, lupine, peas, and vetch. Tubers and root crops include beets, carrots, leeks, onions, potatoes (very recent), taro, and turnips. Leaf and stalk vegetables include asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chive, lettuce, okra, parsley, pepper cress, purslane, rape, rocket, and spinach. Vine and ground fruits include cantaloupe, cucumbers, eggplant, gourds, grapes, pumpkins, strawberries, tomatoes, and watermelons.

Tree fruits include bananas, citrons, dates, figs, jujubes, oranges, pomegranates, and, mainly in Lower Egypt, apples, apricots, mulberries, olives, peaches, pears, plums, and quinces. Condiments and indulgents include anise, black mustard, caraway, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, poppies, red peppers, sorrel, sugarcane, and tobacco. Textile plants include cotton, flax, hemp, and jute. Oil and dye plants include the castor oil plant, henna, indigo, madder, safflower, saffron, and sesame. Domesticated animals include cattle, water buffaloes, camels, horses, donkeys, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, chickens, pigeons, and a few ducks, geese, turkeys, and bees. Dried dung is used for fuel, and considerable use is made of milk, butter, and cheese. Hunting and gathering are insignificant, but there is considerable fishing in the Nile. Trade is important, and there are weekly markets.

Sex Division of Labor

Men do most of the agricultural work, tend and milk the larger animals, and engage in trade. Women care for poultry and often for sheep and goats, and they sometimes milk and assist the men in harvesting.

Property

Land is privately rather than communally owned, and can be bought and sold. Most agricultural land is held by large landowners or the government, the Fellahin being largely tenants. Only pasture lands are enclosed.

Inheritance is patrilineal. In accordance with Islamic law, all children share equally except that shares received by daughters are half as large as those received by sons. A man may, however, dispose of his estate by an oral will made in the presence of his children and two male witnesses. When this is done, the eldest son commonly receives a larger share--often about half of the estate.

Social Stratification

Slavery is no longer practiced, but class distinctions are of some consequence. Large landowners and the landless peasantry are clearly distinguished, and there is a small middle class. There is also considerable differentiation.

Marriage

Marriage involves a moderate negotiated bride-price in money.

Polygyny is permitted up to the Koranic limit of four wives, but it is practiced by only five per cent of the Egyptian population. When it occurs it is strictly non-sororal in form, and the husband establishes each wife in a separate apartment or house. He rotates among them, spending one day with each in turn.

Family

The normal household unit is a small patrilocal extended family consisting of a man and his married sons with their wives and unmarried children. The household usually breaks up after the death of the father, who has strong patriarchal authority. Occasionally, however, sons continue to reside together after the death of their father, but not if they have divided his estate.

Residence

The patrilocal rule prevails. However, in the town of Silwa at least, residence is usually initially matrilocal in the house of the bride's father, and the shift to patrilocal residence comes only after the birth of the first child.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

There is a strong tendency toward local endogamy.

First cousin marriage is common. The first preference is for marriage with a FaBrDa, the second for marriage with a MoBrDa. Premarital sex relations and adultery with a married woman are forbidden.

Descent is patrilineal, with a segmentary lineage system of Arabic type. Both sibs and lineages of all levels tend markedly toward endogamy.

Settlement Pattern

The Fellahin live in compact villages, which are often walled. Streets are narrow and irregular. Dwellings are rectangular in shape, with flat roofs of wooden beams and earth. The walls are constructed of stones or sun-dried brick coated with mud and often whitewashed.

Community Organization

A village tends toward the structure of a patrilocal clan-community. Although it normally includes members of different lineages, these commonly belong to the same sib. Boys are circumcised. Winkler gives the age as 3-5, Klunzinger as 5-10.

Local Government

The village has no council of elders or popular assembly. Silwa today has an elective headman, but for Kiman Winkler reports a local representative of the Egyptian government, called ʿomde, a hereditary sheikh subordinate to him, and a small armed police force controlled by the former.

State

Modern Egypt is a complex state.

Warfare

There is no indication of internal warfare, but blood vengeance still prevails.

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175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

175 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite
178 of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah
178 using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrizi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

1: Ammar, Hamed. Growing up in an Egyptian Village: Silwa, Province of Aswan. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954.

Pp. xvii, 316; preface; 13 appendices; 8 tables; bibliography; index.

Harvard: Afr. 4180.5.

[This source is a study of the social and psychological aspects of education in the village community of Silwa. A discussion of the economy, social organization and religion is followed by an analysis of socialization from infancy to marriage and adulthood. Children's play, games and folk tales are described and analyzed in some detail. The appendices include results of psychological tests administered by the author.

This is the first study of child training in a village community which is dominated by the Islamic tradition. (The author was born in Silwa and his personal connections permitted a high degree of participation in the community life.) Although the village is relatively isolated and conservative, influences from urban areas are being felt. The author includes a discussion of social change,

1: Ammar, Hamed.

especially the impact of modern schooling on the village culture. Throughout an interdisciplinary approach is used (anthropological, sociological and psychological). --Analyst]

Field date: 1951
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist, Indigene-5
Processed in 1963

2: Blackman, Winifred S. The Fellähin of Upper Egypt. Their Social and Industrial Life Today with Special Reference to Survivals from Ancient Times. London: George G. Harrap & Company Ltd. 1927

Pp. 331, frontispiece; 186 illustrations

Yale: Bk8 325

[This volume is a general ethnography of the Fellahin of Upper Egypt. In general it is a very detailed and precise account. It is particularly rich on rites of passage, folk religion, technology and material culture, magic, beliefs about the soul, rituals and general economic life. The final chapter is devoted to a comparison of certain aspects of modern Fellahin culture to that of ancient Egypt in order to show cultural conservatism and continuity in the Nile Valley--Analyst.]

Field date: 1920-1926
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1962

3: Ayrout, Henry Habib. The Fellaheen. Translated by Hilary Wayment, with a foreword by M. Taher Pasha. Cairo: R. Schindler, 1945.

Pp. 179, 4 plates

Yale: Nde47 E3 938ag

/This volume by a Catholic priest of Syrian birth is primarily a study of the ethos and psychology of the Egyptian peasant. In addition to the penetrating analysis and insight into Fellahin mentality there is also much detailed information on agriculture, diet, social groupings, ingroup antagonisms, home life and the Fellahin as an individual. The final sections deal with social conditions and poverty among the Fellahin and the efforts which have been made by both the Egyptian government and private individuals to alleviate these conditions and improve the socio-economic status of the Fellahin. Although it is a general book on the Fellahin the information seems to have been gathered mostly from Lower and Middle Egypt and to a lesser extent from Upper Egypt -- Analyst/

Field date: ca. 1935
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Clergyman - 5
Processed in 1962

4: Walker, John. Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. Being the Relevant parts of the Tibb al-Rukka or Old Wives Medicine of 'Abd al-Rahman Ismā'il. London: Luzac & Co. 1934.

Yale Med. Hist: R651 E3 934A P. 3-128; 3 plates

/This volume is a description and commentary on Egyptian folk medicine in the late nineteenth century. The Egyptian author, in a style of humor somewhat reminiscent of Ernest Renan and Anatole France, wrote the original volumes in order to point out the superstitiousness, absurdity and dangers in many of these medical practices--Analyst/.

Field date: no date
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 4
Processed in 1962

5: Blackman, Winifred S. The Karīn and Karīneh. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 56, pp. 163-169. London, 1926.

4 text figures.

Yale: Nk10. +R81. v. 56

/This article deals with the belief in a "double" (which is born with every human being) and its characteristics. Since a "double" may cause the illness of a person or his children, there are various cures and precautions which are discussed.

The author's field work was done in Middle and Upper Egypt, mostly among women. --Analyst/

Field-date: 1923
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1963

6. Rasoul, Kawthar Abdel. Zar in Egypt. Weiner Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen, Jahrgang 3, No. 1, pp. 80-89. Wien: Völkerkundliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft in der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, 1955.

Yale: Nk10 +V85W 3

(This is a short summary of the zar ceremony as practiced among the women in Egypt. Basically it is both a propitiatory and curative rite for those women possessed by the zar spirits. The author also discusses the Sudanic-Ethiopian origins and the functions of this cult and its rites - analyst)

Field date: no date
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Unknown - 5
Processed in 1962

7: Riad, Mohamed. Native Plough in Egypt. Bulletin de la Société de Géographie D'Égypte, Vol. 33, pp. 241-277. Cairo (?), 1960.

4 text figures (maps); tables; 8 end plates.

American Museum of Natural History

/This source describes the seven plow types found in Egypt, their distribution and evolution. The author defines certain geographical sub-regions based on both plow types and the nomenclature of parts of the plow. (The local terms used are given in table form following the text.)--Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Ethnologist-4, 5
Processed in 1963

8: Schaefer, Heinrich. The Songs of An Egyptian Peasant. English edition by Frances Hart Breasted. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1904.

Pp. xxiv, 148; frontispiece; 12 plates.

University of Chicago: PJ 7747 S32.

[This source consists of the texts 134 songs without musical notation collected by the author, an archaeologist, in the winter of 1900-1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun temple of King Ne-user-Re at Abusir. The songs were dictated to the author by two native informants, and consist of the Arabic texts as originally recorded in Latinized orthography with their translation into English. The songs are concerned with themes of religion, work, love and a group which the author calls "miscellaneous." Each song is accompanied by explanatory notes to clarify the meaning of certain vague references in the text, or to give further ethnographic information on Fellahin life. The English version of the songs, as presented here by Frances H. Breasted, is not merely a translation of the German edition, for whernever necessary the Arabic was also consulted.--Analyst]

Field date: 1900-1901
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Archaeologist-5
Processed in 1962

9: Klunzinger, C. B. Upper Egypt: Its People and Its Products. Preface by Georg Schweinfurth, New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1878.

Pp. xv, 408; preface; 4 page illustrations; 20 text illustrations

Yale: WC. 9235

Only pp. 158-203 have been processed for the MR13 Fellahin file.

/This source is concerned mainly with the religious and secular festivals and ceremonies held during the year in Upper Egypt. Included in the discussion are descriptions of the processions, entertainment, costumes, dancers, and musicians. Information is also given about the daily routine of both men and women and about family life and organization. --Analyst/

Field date: 1863-1875
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Physician-5
Processed in 1963

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Pp. 87; plates, sketches; maps

Yale: DI M53 3

/This source is an interpretative study of a village in the Nile Delta. Since the Fellahin file has been limited for the sample to Upper Egypt, this source has not been processed for the MR13 Fellahin file. ---Analyst/

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NOTES

113 The notes are those of the Second French Edition of 1942 (Horus, Cairo), except where marked *T*. These are annotations by the translator.

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1. HISTOIRE DE LA NATION EGYPTIENNE, 7 vols, Paris 1931-6. published under the auspices of King Fuad I, and edited by G. Hanotaux.

PRÉCIS DE L'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, various authors, 4 vols, Cairo 1932-5.

L'EGYPTE ANCIENNE, MODERNE, CONTEMPORAINE, P. Henaut, S.J., Cairo, 1935.

L'EGYPTE, APERÇU HISTORIQUE ET GÉOGRAPHIQUE, Cairo 1926.

1(a) *T*.—The standard works in English are :
Cromer (Earl of) : MODERN EGYPT, 2 vols, London 1908.
Lloyd (Lord Lloyd of Dolobran) : EGYPT SINCE CROMER, London 1934.

[101] 2. FELLAH, masc. sing., originally one who tills or ploughs the soil ; masc. plural FELLAHEEN ; fem. sing. FELLAHA.

3. DÉSCRIPTION DE L'EGYPTE, Paris, 1821-9.

These volumes comprise a valuable collection of detailed observations and researches, made in Egypt during the Napoleonic Expedition.

4. Jean Brunhes : LA GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1925.

P. Vidal de la Blacho : PRINCIPES DE GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

Lucien Febvre : LA TERRE ET L'EVOLUTION HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

5. *T.*—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrîzi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 133 [134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

113 162 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant." THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan. [423]

[453 426] 15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAB, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651]

27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249
136]

28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465]

29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249]

31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that overpopulation affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735]

33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302]

38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

113

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS. Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

● 113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand. E F 113

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages. F [586]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14. F [162 872]

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.) E F [796 527]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F
113

See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library,

F [192]

63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171]

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443] 186

68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346]

69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191

72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

but in fact it has been influenced considerably both by the colloquial and by modern European languages. Conservatives attempt to maintain, and reformers to narrow, the wide gap which still remains. 191

73. MODERN EGYPT, by the Earl of Cromer : Macmillan, London, 1908. The second of the two volumes deals with the social condition of Egypt. 113

74. THE BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, by Ibrahim Rashad, Director of the Department of Co-operation in the Ministry of Agriculture : Government Press, Cairo, 1935 (in Arabic). The second of the two volumes deals with Egyptian practice.

75. See an excellent study in Arabic by Dr Sayyid Karim in the review EL-IMARA (*Architecture*), No. 11 for 1941, pp. 51-64 : VILLAGE REFORM : THE MODEL OR THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE ?

76. 'Successive Governments have spent L.E.14,000,000 to pay off debts on property, that is to say to save the big landowners, who do not number above 13,000. This means that these privileged persons have received an average of L.E. 1,000 each, which has been paid out by the Treasury on the pretext of maintaining agricultural prosperity. [746 735]

'The Government has this year allotted L.E. 17,000 to the establishment of social centres. This means that each poor fellah is to have half a piastre. If we add to this the expense of supplying drinking-water and free medical treatment, the sum set aside for the poor by the Government is no more than a few piastres a head.' (AL-INZAR, Minia, 3.3.1941)

77. Draft Budget for 1941-2, in the Annals of the Chamber of Deputies for April 1941.

See also: Ibnet ish-Shaty': THE QUESTION OF THE FELLAH : THE REFORM OF VILLAGE EDUCATION, DEFECTS IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, pp. 112-131.

Taha Bey Hussein : THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN EGYPT (1938), Vol. II, pp. 94-125 on ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Jacques Tagher : THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT (1942), pp. 59-63.

(The last three are all in Arabic.)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

113 78. 'Aly Shamsy Pasha, Speech in the Chamber, December 1939.

79. A VILLAGE SUMMER SCHOOL, article in THE SOCIAL WORKERS' BULLETIN, May 1938.

80. 'Abdul-Halim Abu-Seif Radi, 7.4.1941.

81. Apostolic Letter to the Mexican Bishops, 28.3.1937; section on the peasantry.

785 796 527 82. The fasting month of Ramadan is succeeded by the month of Shawwal, the first three days of which are a great public holiday, the Lesser Bairam. About two months later comes the other great holiday, the four days of the Great Bairam.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

SOME months before his death, in May, 1928, my master and friend the Rev. T. H. Weir, D.D., Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Glasgow, suggested to me that I might translate the following little Arabic treatise on some superstitious practices in modern Egypt. He very graciously allowed me to have access to certain of his own rough translation notes, but unfortunately I was unable to finish my rendering in time to profit by his valuable criticism and advice. I can here but inadequately express my deep sense of gratitude for his inspiring teaching, his great erudition, and, more than all, his memorable friendship. 114

The treatise of which this is an English rendering, appeared in Arabic in two small volumes of 158 pages in all, printed at Cairo in 1892–4 (A.H. 1310–12). The author was an Egyptian doctor, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī Ismā'īl, and his book is entitled *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, i.e., The Medicine of the Old Women. For an etymological note on the meaning and origin of the word *rukka* reference may be made to page 18 of the text. A third volume was promised but, so far as can be discovered, was never issued.[1] I understand that the late Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, contemplated translating the present volumes. Certainly he refers to the work in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine*, 1921, page 65. The Arabic text is also referred to by Professor D. B. Macdonald in his article on magic (*siḥr*) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, in which he states that it "contains much curious information on popular superstitions, especially medical; the author is a graduate of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī medical school and writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner."[2]

In spite of the author's obvious lack of sympathy with the popular medical "prescriptions," he had ample opportunity of gaining first hand knowledge of the customs and practices of 113 114

[1] The author did publish in the following year, with the approval of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, a work called *Al-Taḳwīmāt al-Ṣiḥḥīya*, but it is merely a straightforward, elementary treatise on hygiene.

[2] Prof. Macdonald vocalizes the title in his transliteration as *Ṭibb al-Rikka* (see below, p. 18).

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113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public
[123] that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully
[191] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

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1860. There is also *Al-Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (trans. by 113 Jayakar, and published by Luzac & Co., London, 1906–8), an entertaining zoological lexicon which has embedded in it many curious instances of Moslem folk-medicine.

To confine our attention to Egypt, however, without doubt 114 a great deal could be done by a cultured Egyptian student of 121 folk-customs to collect these age-old, but fast dying, practices. A stranger can seldom hope to obtain, unless after many years' residence among, and constant intercourse with, the natives, that insight into their mentality which is necessary for such a study. Hence the work, here presented in an English garb, should be of no little value to students of folklore, and indeed to all interested in human thought and waywardness, since education, in general, and medical science, in particular, have both made rapid progress of recent years in Egypt, and the Egyptian Government's proposal to establish hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country will do much to eradicate the "cures" of the Old Wives and the village charlatans. So the day is coming, we hope, when the dangerous "remedies" of the modern Nile Dwellers will be no longer practised, but will be relegated to the archives of human error. As such the instances recorded in the present book should have increasing historical value.

The Arabic original is now out of print—in fact the British Museum possesses only Part I—but by this rendering into English of the relevant parts it is hoped that the material will be made more accessible than it otherwise would be. The translation has not been without difficulties. Besides being unvocalized throughout, as well as faulty in style, the Arabic text is none too well printed, and there are several textual errors. Still another difficulty that presents itself to a non-medical reader, is the exact rendering into English of the many medical terms used. Unfortunately the great Dictionary of Medical Terms compiled by Dr. Sharaf,[1] which has proved [113] very helpful, is only English-Arabic and not *vice versa*. This has necessitated a great deal of search and rectification. It is to be hoped that the medical equivalents are not too glaringly

[1] *An English-Arabic Dictionary of Medicine, Biology and Allied Sciences*, by Dr. Mohammed Sharaf, Cairo, Government Press, 1926 (1st edition).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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241 [243] found in what we have observed in a small village in Central Delta. To thresh corn the Egyptians use a special cart or wagon with sharp-edged iron wheels which is drawn either by one or two animals. This implement is used since a very long time in Egypt. Some five years ago the peasants of this village—and probably in many places in the Egypt—can hire a tractor of a rich neighbour, and let the tractor pull three to five threshing waggons, one behind the other. In this way a work of a week done by the slow animals and one cart, is done in a day or two by the quick tractor and the triple number of threshing waggons. In a similar way mechanical ploughs can be used. The spread of mechanical ploughs would end, among others, in the following results :

1. Quick ploughing would result in relieving many working hands for other periodic wage-labour, increasing thus the private income.

2. Relieving the animals from a part of their hard work, thus enabling Egypt to develop animal husbandry and dairy production.

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

its manifold cares, allowed me.[1] Moreover, I am entirely without previous training as an Arabist, since all that I know of the language, was learned during my two years' sojourn in Egypt, when the study of Arabic was merely an incidental matter. I am, therefore, greatly indebted to Professor Dr. A. Fischer, of Leipzig, for going to the trouble of looking through my "layman's-translations" and freeing them from a number of mistakes, both great and small. That the work, nevertheless, contains various mistakes, is due to the circumstances already mentioned, and we are both fully aware of them. What may be said of the songs from the standpoint of the Arabist, will be elsewhere stated by Professor Fischer[2], when he will also indicate where he does not agree with the translations and explanations which I have adopted. 114

I could almost wish that a good deal of fault may be found with my work, if it might prove true the German proverb: "Dass man der Dornen acht', das haben die Rosen gemacht." In Lane's classical book[3] we have a most excellent description of the life and customs of the inhabitants of Cairo. The treatment of the conditions in Upper Egypt is lim-

[1]) In No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, L. Borchardt gives a vivid description of a working-day.

[2]) For lesser contributions I am indebted to L. Borchardt as well as Professor Dr. Lippert.

[3]) An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. (London 1836; 1882; herein cited from the old edition.) [113]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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114 ited to a few pages, and yet it is just these which are vastly more important to us Egyptologists, for the history of culture. But the work of a layman's leisure hours can not produce a supplement to Lane.

Some young, efficient Arabist, with open eyes and a fondness for the land and inhabitants, and possessed of sufficient knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Coptic language, ought to bury himself for two or three years, in an Upper Egyptian village. I am convinced that this sacrifice would be richly repaid in regard to the Arabic language also. It can not be accomplished by mere visits during the season.[1]

Up to this time next to nothing has been done in this direction[2], and who knows when it may be too late?

It would please me most of all, if my book should prove an incentive for the production of a better one, which would form a companion-piece to G. Dalman's excellent "Palaestinischer Diwan" (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901).

Heinrich Schaefer.

Steglitz, June 13, 1902.

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[181] [1]) The Egyptians are much more unapproachable and reserved in many things than is apparent from slight contact.

[113] [2]) Klunzinger's splendid book: "Bilder aus Ober-Aegypten etc." (Stuttgart, 1877.) gives a great deal, but not all, by far, of the wealth of material.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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40.

×539 304 852 The father hurries home to the festivity.

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābiš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adāit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands râqide instead of rāide.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Foreword

In writing a foreword to Dr. H. M. Ammar's study of growing up in an Egyptian village, I am expressing in particular terms the general satisfaction which every university teacher feels when a field of research which he has been advocating for some time, is adopted, investigated and made the subject of an original study. Dr. Ammar's book was the result of an intensive period of field work in Egypt, preceded by systematic study in London where he formulated his theories, argued his premises in seminars, and examined the main approaches to his problems. He has done me the honour of referring to several of my published papers, and it is clear from these references and from the way in which he has handled his topic, that his research was directed towards the almost unexplored field of the social and psychological aspects of the training of children in a village community. The village of Silwa which he chose for his study was a community which in its social structure and economic life was, to a large extent, homogeneous. Though it was relatively isolated geographically, it was not unaffected by social change, and an important section of Dr. Ammar's book deals with the impact of a modern system of schooling on the outlook and activities of the villagers.

The publication of this study marks a second stage in the contribution of the University of London Institute of Education to this important field. In 1940, Dr. Otto Raum, also a former post-graduate student at the Institute, published his *Chaga Childhood*, the first full-scale study of indigenous tribal education undertaken at a British university. Dr. Raum's book was the first landmark in a new approach to the study of what had formerly been called 'Primitive Education'. In this book he related the process of training Chaga children in their own environment to the nature and activities of Chaga tribal institutions, and relied on the teaching and field work of social anthropologists, chiefly those of the functional school, for his theoretical guidance.

The focus of interest of scholars in this field, up to the publication of Dr. Raum's book in 1940, was in societies which were then designated as 'primitive'. Subsequent field studies, between 1940 and 1953, were almost exclusively confined to tribal societies, where the culture was enshrined in institutions, distinctive to, and dominant in, a particular tribe, and hence

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

114 limited to that tribal group and tribal area. The notable exceptions to the limitation to tribal societies were the American field studies in Indian communities in North, Central, and South America, and in Negro communities in the southern states. Only one piece of research, and that hardly an intensive village study, had been undertaken in the cultural areas dominated by the Islamic tradition, and none in the cultural areas of the Far East and South-East Asia.

Dr. Ammar's book is therefore a landmark in two respects. He has carried out research in child training in a village community dominated by the Islamic cultural pattern, and has established the validity of these studies in a society which shows many contrasts with tribal societies. He has also demonstrated an original line of research. His dominant interest lay in the problems of personality and culture. In his exploratory research he ranged widely in the modern anthropological studies of culture, and also in the inter-disciplinary approach to the study of personality. In his theoretical examination of his problems, and in the organization and analysis of his field work, he has brought together the contributions of social anthropologists and of psychologists, both British and American. In his capacity as a trained educationist he has focused these contributions on the dual aspect of education of the children in Silwa village, in its traditional and modern forms. It is this correlation of the study of traditional child training, in its setting of the village culture of Upper Egypt, with the examination of the impact of modern schooling on that village culture, which distinguishes Dr. Ammar's contribution to the progress of research in this field.

There have been relatively few intensive and localized studies of the part played by modern education in social change in Western Europe. There have been fewer still in tropical areas, and in those parts of the Middle and Far East where the form and content and methods of modern schooling have been to a large extent exported from Western Europe, or at least have received their initial impetus and imprint from that source. Dr. Ammar has also accepted the challenge of the need for research in this second unexplored field, which is necessarily correlated with the problems of cultural continuity in societies where a traditional form of social and economic life still persists. There is often a time-lag between the introduction of educational reforms and their full implementation, due to the reluctance to accept reforms by those elements in the population which regard imposed cultural changes of any kind as a threat to their security. Here Dr. Ammar has indicated further lines of research which are significant in all plans for educational advance.

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Institute of Education,
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February, 1954.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FOREWORD

121
114

HERODOTUS, the father of anthropology, might have been surprised to learn that he was destined to number daughters as well as sons among his intellectual progeny. There can be no doubt, however, that Miss Blackman can justly claim to be reckoned in the direct line of his descendants. In Egypt, her chosen field of research, Herodotus gathered some of his most valuable material. His method too was like hers, namely, to take down the traditional lore of the folk as it came fresh and straight from their lips. The ideal collector of folklore must have a genius for hob-nobbing. From lettered priest to unlettered peasant, all classes of the population must be on gossiping terms with him. Of course, he does not plague them with set questions. Though he keeps a note-book handy he does not flourish it in their faces. He makes it his business not so much to talk as to listen. If the soul of the people is to be revealed they must be overheard as, all unconscious of the presence of the stranger, they fuss and chatter about the affairs of the hour—about the prices of the market and the state of the crops, about yesterday's funeral and to-morrow's wedding, about the donkey's sore back and the sore eyes of the baby. The secret, in short, is to observe unobserved. The folklorist should be capable of melting like a disembodied spirit into the atmosphere of the local life. Or, if he is to be noticeable at all, let it at least be in some character that is strictly consonant with his surroundings. Thus Miss Blackman might possibly have preferred to dispense altogether with her widespread reputation for healing power. Yet to go about trailing clouds of contagious virtue was at all events more in keeping with prevailing notions of normal behaviour than if they had happened, say, to be clouds of exotic scent.

Moreover, not only is anthropology the product of friendly relations, but it likewise produces them. I am thinking more especially of the great kindness which Miss Blackman experienced everywhere at the hands of the leading officials of Egypt. They were evidently in full sympathy with her scientific aims. Unfortunately,

[page 4 is blank]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to
114 lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of
133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the
144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the
131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction
174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the
175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and
538 imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FOREWORD

largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT

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PREFACE

THIS book represents but a small portion of the work upon which I have been engaged in Egypt during the last six years. I have spent, on an average, six months annually in the country, living almost entirely among the *fellāḥīn*. I wish to make it quite clear to my readers that the customs and beliefs, and the general manner of life, described in this book represent those of the peasants only; by the upper classes they have, of course, long been discarded. These customs and beliefs are of great importance and interest in themselves, but the fact that most of them are very ancient makes it still more urgent that they should be adequately studied and recorded. Already my researches have thrown light on points hitherto obscure to students of ancient Egypt; hence this book may, I hope, be not only an addition to anthropological knowledge, but also a contribution to Egyptology.

It has been my aim to describe the life of the modern inhabitants of the Nile Valley in the simplest way, avoiding technical language, for my purpose in writing this book has been to interest the general public and present them with a readable and, at the same time, true description of the peasants of Egypt.

I want to emphasize the fact that though the contents of this book form but a tithe of the information I have collected, yet even so I am only at the beginning of my work. Many years of research still lie ahead of me, for the sources of information are very far from exhausted. When my work is more nearly complete my intention is to produce a large and strictly scientific volume on the beliefs and practices and the social and industrial life of the modern Egyptians.

I have endeavoured to be strictly accurate in all my statements. Every custom and belief here dealt with has been most carefully inquired into before I committed it to paper. Nevertheless, those who are experienced field-workers in anthropology know how easy it is to make mistakes and to misunderstand, even after careful investigation, the true inwardness of things. I therefore invite

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121 criticism, and I hope that, if I have misunderstood a point, my Egyptian friends will not hesitate to inform me. I am most anxious that educated Egyptians should recognize the importance of the anthropology and folklore of their country, and my earnest hope is that some of them will be persuaded to take up this study. They surely, if they received the proper training, would be best able to undertake anthropological research among their own people. Before very long I much hope that I may see a flourishing anthropological institute established in Cairo, forming a centre for all such research work, not only in Egypt itself, but in adjacent countries—for who knows how far the influence of ancient Egypt has extended? Some writers in England even postulate an almost world-wide diffusion of Egyptian culture!

I have said that I am only at the beginning of my work. I have not as yet touched Lower Egypt, and my idea is to include in my researches not only the whole of Egypt proper, but the Egyptian Oases and Lower Nubia. I must also undertake a far more intensive study of the provinces which I have already visited, carefully recording all local differences. This of course requires many more years of hard work.

The cult of Muslim sheikhs and Coptic saints is a subject in which I have particularly interested myself. I have not dealt with [114] it here in detail, as I hope shortly to bring out a book dealing solely with the beliefs, ceremonies, and mythology connected with these venerated persons.

122 I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grants which they have made me during the last four years, and to the Royal Society and the Committee for Anthropology in Oxford for supplementary grants. I owe much also to the encouragement and kindly appreciation of my work which I have received from so many in the University and elsewhere, and to the support afforded me by the special committee appointed by the British Association to promote the furtherance of my researches. To the officials in Egypt and to the Egyptians generally I owe more than I can express. Without the assistance and facilities afforded me by the officials, and the friendliness I have encountered among all classes alike, it would have been quite impossible for me to have accomplished the work I have done. Some of the officials have personally assisted me in my investigations, and the way the

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CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 •114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *felláḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, 562 and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be [872] taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are [450] engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [744] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 577 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [559] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 12

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114 because of my real affection for them, and because I very greatly
12 desire to see their lives improved, especially from the moral standpoint, that I venture to speak openly on a subject in which I am much interested—*i.e.*, how to assure a more wholesome childhood and a higher mental training for the girls, so that they may be better and wiser wives and mothers.

114 I have every cause to speak of these people with affection, for
181 their courtesy to me has been unbounded, and I have often marvelled at their patience and cheerfulness, even in the midst of poverty and great privations, which they bear with a courage that enforces respect. Their kindness to each other in times of trouble is most marked, and they will as a rule, however poor they may be, share their scanty fare with one whose position may be even worse than their own. This nobler side of their character shows what a fine people they might become were the women, the chief influence in any community, to receive a better training in childhood, a more suitable education, and to have held up before them a higher ideal of life.

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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

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FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

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[Text continued on page 216]

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FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

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case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

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time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of
753 my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

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Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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CHAPTER XIV

'AFĀRĪT

AMONG the varous supernatural beings who figure conspicuously in tle life of Egyptian peasants are the *'afārīt* (singular *'afrīt*. This word is usually translated in dictionaries 'devils' or 'demons,' as distinct from the *ginn*, who are, properly speaking, thegood spirits.[1] The peasants, however, so I have found, employ tle words *ginn* and *'afārīt* indiscriminately, the latter word being more commonly used. The *'afārīt* are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intentwho wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enterinto anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfeed with. 776

The *'afārīt* are supposed to live under the earth, where they form an organized society, with a king at their head. They haunt, so it is believed, springs and wells in uninhabited regions, such as the desert, and the narrow paths which wind about through the cultivation. There are other places, even on high roads, which are known by those versed in suchmatters to 'belong,' as they say, to *'afārīt*.

On a recent visit to Egypt a charming Rest-house with a good garden was generously placed at my disposal by the Egyptian Government (Fig. 134) It was my custom, when the weather was hot, to sit out in the garden every evening, where some of my village friends would join me drink coffee, and have a chat. Among them was a small dealer in antiquities, who had a considerable knowledge of the folklore of the people. He told me one evening in the course of conversation that the road which ran past my house had, some years back, been much haunted by *'afārīt*, and that a portion of the [114]

[1] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 283 ff., and also his translation of *The Arabian Nights* (London, 1883), vol. i, pp. 26 f. (notes to Introduction).

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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the ●114 first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

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CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

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I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 181 756 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

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[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 203 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

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It should be observed that the story of *The Shah of Persia and his Daughter* (pp. 272 ff.) bears a certain resemblance to the tale told to Herodotus [1] about Mykerinos, his daughter, and the golden image of a cow. If there is any connexion between the two stories, that told to Herodotus may after all be a genuine native folk-tale and not, as Professor Spiegelberg has suggested,[2] a mere dragoman's explanation of a monument—unless, of course, the modern tale is simply a modification of the Herodotean, and reached the masses by way of the Hellenized Egyptians of Græco-Roman times.

[1] ii, 130 f.
[2] *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 15.

FOREWORD

The "Fellaheen" of Egypt are the oldest peasantry in the world. History teaches us this, and also that the Valley of the Nile shows the oldest records of civilised and cultural life. 101

Throughout thousands of years our peasantry has kept its customs, habits, character, and type in a remarkably steady manner. 183

It is still essentially what it was in the far-distant Pharaonic days : one of the two main pillars of Egypt's wealth and well-being. The other, as Herodotus remarked long ago, is the river Nile.

A great deal has been said about the Fellah, particularly during the last few decades, and there is a vast amount of literature about Egypt and its people. Seldom, however, has a writer devoted his main interest to the study of the Egyptian peasant as a human type, looking at him, his character, his culture and traditions, with sympathy, objectivity, and an unbiased view. 114

The present book fills this gap in the literature about our country. We owe its author our sincerest thanks. 000

The more one really studies the Fellaheen of Egypt, the more one will discard a lot of mistaken ideas about their character. Now that the country has come to a turning-point of its history, it is essential that its people as a whole should be fully aware of the tremendous task ahead of them. A complete and intimate collaboration among all classes, a particularly sympathetic understanding — and not just a platonic one — of their peasantry by the upper class and landowners, is the basis and most important element of this patriotic cooperation. The "Fellah", whether as a small — and how small! — landowner or as an agri-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In 1938, after having been offered as a thesis for the Doctorate of Letters in the University of Lyons, this book was puplished by Payot, Paris, under the title of MŒURS ET COUTUMES DES FELLAHS. 114

This work, with an admirable foreword by Monsieur André Allix, based on a real affection for the Egyptian fellah, was the result of many years study and observation of these people. In writing it, our intention was not merely to enlighten and inform, but also to indicate the beginnings of a plan of action.

Today, having under our care a hundred elementary schools in Upper Egypt, and visiting each month many far-distant villages, we aim at putting into practice the fundamental idea set out in this book. In the present education of our fellahs, we strive to draw closer together what we call "Outside Egypt" — ourselves — and "Inside Egypt" — the fellah.

The demand for the book very soon outran the supply, and there was an increasing demand for a new edition. Consequently, in 1942, a revised edition, with a preface by H.E. Fuad Abaza Pasha, was published in Cairo by "Horus" under the title of Fellahs. In the following year there appeared an Arabic translation from the competent pen of Mohammad Ghallab, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Al Azhar. This edition was enriched with many notes by this eminent Professor.

Now, to meet the desire often expressed by English-speaking readers, we publish the present translation, which, although contemplated for some time, has only recently been completed. The translator, Mr Hilary Wayment, is

114 known to many readers here for his book Egypt Now, published during the war. It shows him to be thoroughly conversant with the life and problems of the fellah.

This English edition is a translation of the latest French version, with additional notes. May it enlighten its readers and bring them to an affectionate and helpful understanding of the fellaheen, a people who live under the same skies and on the same soil as ourselves.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

At the end of last century there appeared in France a book entitled *Le Fellah*. This book describes the life of an Egyptian aristocrat educated in France, who precisely because he had lost touch with the fellaheen and was in almost every way their antithesis, took a perverse pride in calling himself a fellah. It is typical of the lack of interest in the fellaheen which most writers about Egypt have shown that this book should have been cited in a whole chain of bibliographies as if it were a fundamental study of the fellaheen and life in the Egyptian countryside. One can only suppose that the writers had never seen a copy of the book, let alone read it. 114

The fact is that the serious study of rural society in Egypt has only just begun. It is over a century since Lane published his admirable book on *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, but this deals largely with the life of the upper classes in Cairo. After the first World War an Englishwoman, Miss W.M. Blackman, went to live for several years in the Egyptian countryside before writing *The Felláhin of Upper Egypt* (Harrap, 1927). But Miss Blackman approached the fellaheen more as an anthropologist than as a sociologist, and was much more impressed by the superstitious practices which bind them to the past than by the actual pattern of their social existence.

Father Ayrout's book first appeared in 1938 under the title *Mœurs et Coutumes des Fellahs* in the *Collection d'études, de documents et de témoignages pour servir à l'histoire de notre temps*, published by Payot, Paris. It was accepted at once, not only in France but also in Egypt, as a standard work on the fellaheen, and in 1942, in response to widespread demand, it was republished by "Horus" of Cairo in a revised edition entitled *Fellahs*.

Father Ayrout was the first to attempt a full-length study of the life of the fellaheen in all its main aspects. Born an Egyptian of Syrian origin, and speaking both French

[page 11]
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114 and Arabic, he has taught for many years in Cairo and paid regular visits to a number of elementary schools in the villages of Upper Egypt. He is thus peculiarly fitted to interpret Egypt to the West, and to describe from within the dusty everyday life of the fellaheen, which ninety-nine Europeans out of a hundred must look upon with distant, alien eyes from the windows of a car or railway-carriage.

114 121 As a social document this book is agreed to have no rival, but its theoretical assumptions and conclusions have proved less generally acceptable. In particular Father Ayrout stresses the changelessness of fellah life, though it would be easy to show that in the century and a half which have passed since Napoleon visited Egypt, there has been a process of economic and technical change in the Egyptian countryside which cannot have left the fellah himself unmoved, and is likely in any case to have far-reaching social effects in the decades to come. I have transgressed the limits of a translator's function in revising a passage at the end of the second chapter in which Father Ayrout argues that over-population cannot prove to be a serious problem in Egypt for at least a generation. If the present social and economic set-up remains unchanged, I am convinced that it will. However, since this book was first written the discovery of high-grade iron ore in the desert near Aswan has changed the whole basis of the argument. It will not be long, one hopes, before the great weight of water sustained by the Aswan Dam can be turned into power serving not only to smelt this iron, but also to feed new factories in the Delta, and in due course provide Egypt with an industrial system as productive as her agriculture. This new wealth will make possible not only a higher standard of life for the fellaheen, but also the provision of those educational facilities without which, as Father Ayrout insists, there can be no real progress in the countryside. The sympathy and goodwill towards the fellaheen which a section of the educated classes in Egypt is already beginning to show will then have wider scope and greater effect. Such changes need not destroy, though they may modify, the organic relationship between the fellah and the soil which Father Ayrout values so much.

It often happens that a whole historical period is summed up in a book written at the moment when that period is

passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for 114
town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope 121
that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen*.

* * *

Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have 128
made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning.

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *felláhín*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
London 1945

INTRODUCTION

ON UNDERSTANDING THE FELLAH

A country's peasantry is like the small particles in a sentence, or the strips of leading in a stained-glass window. It binds the nation together, gives it stability and character. It provides that humble but indispensable support on which both economic and social systems rely. By producing more than it consumes, the peasantry maintains society in health, and ensures a sound regularity to the state finances. 182

But the peasantry as a class is composed of separate individuals, of men. Enslaved as they may be to soil and seasons, long-suffering and slow, hide-bound and unprogressive as they appear to us, it is these people above all others who deserve the name of men. 565 182

Too long have we confused the producer with his product and the worker with the fruits of his labour. We have taken our fill of the harvest without a thought for the man who made it grow. We have failed to notice the distress which he himself could not put into words, and perhaps only half felt. And so today we are astonished at the reawakening of the peasantry, and realise with a shock of surprise what a dead weight of ignorance has been allowed to accumulate, both in official circles and in society at large, about the man of the soil. 114

By developing the themes of pastoralism and of natural beauty, and so confounding the peasant with his background, poets and artists of all ages, from Virgil to the present day, have conspired to draw a veil of illusion over the realities of country life. They have given us wonderful pictures, to be sure, but in so doing they have accustomed us to see in country life nothing but its picturesque and sentimental side, to find in an image the whole reality. The "sower's

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114 splendid gesture" has hidden from us the sower, the man himself.

This deformation is especially prevalent in the case of Egypt. In following year by year the books published on this subject in Paris alone, I have been particularly struck by it. French writers of the present day, continuing an established tradition, find Egypt a mine of interest. Between 1926 and 1937, for example, French publications on Egypt amounted to about forty novels and new travel books, not to mention a vast number of articles in newspapers and periodicals, appearing in France itself, as well as all the essays published in Egypt and elsewhere.

Now this vast mass of print, interesting as it is from many points of view, represents little more than an elegantly painted backcloth, a landscape with human figures superimposed. The fellah is never completely forgotten. He earns a few lines here, a page or two there. But he is always regarded superficially, from the outside. In any case he is not a very prominent character, and barely stands out from his background, the soil.

The result is that from such writings we shall learn a great deal about the prostitutes' quarters and the palaces of Cairo and Alexandria, something about the Pyramids, the museums and temples, the mosques and bazaars, rather less about economic and social affairs, and next to nothing about the man who is the very linch-pin of Egyptian society — the fellah.

Scientific writers about Egypt have been no less neglectfull of the fellah than men of letters. The artist looks only at the landscape, the scientist at the land, while to both the peasant remains secondary. This criticism applies to the agriculturalists, the economists, and even the geographers, who have contributed so richly to our land knowledge of Egypt.

The works on agriculture by Audebeau and Mosséri, on irrigation by Willcocks and Barois, on the Nile by Prince Omar Toussoun, on landed property by Artin Pasha, Arminjon and Minost, on the geography of Egypt by Cerviller and Hug are indeed authoritative. They do not fail to mention the fellah, but only as a detail subordinate to their main preoccupations. He is considered only in relation to rext page

nuring, harvesting or irrigation, land-ownership, taxation or the yield per acre. 114

There seemed room, therefore, for a study of the fellah himself which would show him first and foremost as a human being, and consider all these other factors not as he influences them, but as they affect him. This change of perspective should make for a better understanding of Egypt as a whole. 114 121

But the land itself is nothing. Geography may have a place here, but it will be human geography: *homo additus naturae*. And man comes first. Such is human geography as Vidal de la Blache understood it; a science including explanation as well as description, and bordering on psychology and sociology. So without ever separating the tiller of the soil from the earth which sustains and feeds him — for that would be a mutilation — we shall make him the focus of our study.

Our aim then is to portray the fellah's background and the fellah in person; to photograph the very life of these men who humanise the soil of Egypt and in their turn become almost a part of it; and to attempt a description of the contacts which explain their character and personality. 121

To save time, a familiarity with the main facts of the history of Egypt and the outlines of its geography will be taken for granted. A number of excellent works on these subjects have recently been published.

Our enquiry is limited to the fellah in the strict sense of the term, that is to say the farm labourer and small farmer, and does not touch the small craftsmen or the boatmen on the Nile. These are also fellaheen in origin, but their specialisation has given them a different way of life, which deserves a separate study.

We shall speak of the past only when it is necessary, for we are concerned with the fellah as he is today. The present, as we shall soon see, includes the past.

The bibliography, which does not claim to be exhaustive, mentions only those works to which the author has referred for specific points. Egyptian books and periodicals have been preferred where possible, since even if they are not always sufficiently concise or scientific they see Egypt from within, and the information they give, while leaving room for critical discrimination, is at least first-hand.

181 Other landowners or *nazers* take a better view. They
183 say : "Under their noisy exterior, our fellaheen are quiet, gentle people. They are satisfied with their lot, but rarely grateful. They have no interests apart from the soil." "The fellah is always happy and grateful. He is a hard and trusty worker."

114 Some of these opinions, which are taken at random from
181 both Upper and Lower Egypt, seem flatly contradictory. They
183 are not enough to make up a portrait, in spite of the good intentions of those who gave them ; they all arise from a misunderstanding of the fellah and are in both senses of the word *partial* truths. The living reality is more complex. It would be an error of simplification to say 'Man is born good and it is society that makes him bad', or to look at only one side, the good or the evil, according to one's sympathy or lack of sympathy with the subject, or to one's own characteristic personal philosophy and outlook. To create a true picture, all these aspects must be taken into account. As in the old stereoscope, the image cannot appear in depth until both views are seen together, when there is a real combination of elements.

181 One important point must have become clear from what
183 has already been said : that the fellah's intelligence is rather collective than personal, and more static than dynamic. His wisdom and experience have crystallised into pithy sayings and proverbs, which are ready coin for all the different circumstances of his life and absolve him from individual thinking.

The fellah preserves and repeats, but does not originate anything. Any improvements or inventions introduced into agriculture or housing have been imposed on him from outside. Through constant acceptance and submission his intelligence has become atrophied and passive. It is always kept in leading-strings and never stimulated to innovation. That would mean running risks and disturbing a torpor which protects him from unnecessary suffering. What a man knows is better than what he does not know.

This lack of personality and initiative furnishes in its turn an explanation for the want of sensibility or of any living art among the fellaheen. They are uncultivated in this direction less because they are illiterate than because they neither think nor strive. In their fellah costume, in

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

SOME months before his death, in May, 1928, my master and friend the Rev. T. H. Weir, D.D., Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Glasgow, suggested to me that I might translate the following little Arabic treatise on some superstitious practices in modern Egypt. He very graciously allowed me to have access to certain of his own rough translation notes, but unfortunately I was unable to finish my rendering in time to profit by his valuable criticism and advice. I can here but inadequately express my deep sense of gratitude for his inspiring teaching, his great erudition, and, more than all, his memorable friendship. 114

The treatise of which this is an English rendering, appeared in Arabic in two small volumes of 158 pages in all, printed at Cairo in 1892–4 (A.H. 1310–12). The author was an Egyptian doctor, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī Ismā'īl, and his book is entitled *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, i.e., The Medicine of the Old Women. For an etymological note on the meaning and origin of the word *rukka* reference may be made to page 18 of the text. A third volume was promised but, so far as can be discovered, was never issued.[1] I understand that the late Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, contemplated translating the present volumes. Certainly he refers to the work in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine*, 1921, page 65. The Arabic text is also referred to by Professor D. B. Macdonald in his article on magic (*siḥr*) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, in which he states that it "contains much curious information on popular superstitions, especially medical; the author is a graduate of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī medical school and writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner."[2]

In spite of the author's obvious lack of sympathy with the popular medical "prescriptions," he had ample opportunity of gaining first hand knowledge of the customs and practices of 113 114

[1] The author did publish in the following year, with the approval of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, a work called *Al-Taḥafwāt al-Ṣiḥḥiya*, but it is merely a straightforward, elementary treatise on hygiene.

[2] Prof. Macdonald vocalises the title in his transliteration as *Ṭibb al-Rikka* (see below, p. 18).

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those
[123] of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully
[191] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

1860. There is also *Al-Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (trans. by 113
Jayakar, and published by Luzac & Co., London, 1906–8), an entertaining zoological lexicon which has embedded in it many curious instances of Moslem folk-medicine.

To confine our attention to Egypt, however, without doubt 114
a great deal could be done by a cultured Egyptian student of 121
folk-customs to collect these age-old, but fast dying, practices. A stranger can seldom hope to obtain, unless after many years' residence among, and constant intercourse with, the natives, that insight into their mentality which is necessary for such a study. Hence the work, here presented in an English garb, should be of no little value to students of folklore, and indeed to all interested in human thought and waywardness, since education, in general, and medical science, in particular, have both made rapid progress of recent years in Egypt, and the Egyptian Government's proposal to establish hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country will do much to eradicate the "cures" of the Old Wives and the village charlatans. So the day is coming, we hope, when the dangerous "remedies" of the modern Nile Dwellers will be no longer practised, but will be relegated to the archives of human error. As such the instances recorded in the present book should have increasing historical value.

The Arabic original is now out of print—in fact the British Museum possesses only Part I—but by this rendering into English of the relevant parts it is hoped that the material will be made more accessible than it otherwise would be. The translation has not been without difficulties. Besides being unvocalized throughout, as well as faulty in style, the Arabic text is none too well printed, and there are several textual errors. Still another difficulty that presents itself to a non-medical reader, is the exact rendering into English of the many medical terms used. Unfortunately the great Dictionary of Medical Terms compiled by Dr. Sharaf,[1] which has proved [113] very helpful, is only English-Arabic and not *vice versa*. This has necessitated a great deal of search and rectification. It is to be hoped that the medical equivalents are not too glaringly

[1] *An English-Arabic Dictionary of Medicine, Biology and Allied Sciences*, by Dr. Mohammed Sharaf, Cairo, Government Press, 1926 (1st edition).

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ق = ك, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ج by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Lane & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

4: Walker E-4 (nó date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

Study and research have shown that the cases in which the "treatment" of the *Fargân* proved successful were caused by dogs that were not rabid. It happened one day that a dog bit a man who was passing by. This man went to the encampment of the *Fargân* in search of healing. They "treated" him with cautery like the others. Not many days elapsed until there appeared in him symptoms of real hydrophobia, and night and day he was heard barking shrilly, behaving like a dog in all his actions, while his teeth were gnashing in terror. In this state he continued for a space, then he died.

Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the claim made by the *Fargân*, they have only to bring their proofs and, when their assertion is substantiated, we shall be satisfied with the glory that our common people are better than the élite of Western savants. But when we consider the matter we find that such high skill in the healing art is not achieved as a favour, but by habitual toil and industry. And the physician Pasteur, whose fame has filled the two hemispheres, did not gain his immense wealth and widespread reputation, except by devoting his life to the discovery of what he achieved in the treatment of this disease (namely, hydrophobia) after its cure was (thought) impossible. The French government built for him at their own expense a special hospital to which patients go from all quarters of the inhabited world. As for Egypt we do not forget that the Khedivial Government has sent, for the past six years, five of those afflicted with hydrophobia [p. 72] to Paris to be benefited by healing at the hand of that famous physician. So if the *Fargân* are to be trusted in what they assert, why then are they niggardly in publishing the truth, and averse to the praiseworthy place in History that would be theirs on their revealing it?

Long ago, Galen said that those bitten by dogs benefited by being given daily a drachm of burned powder of river crabs, and the illness would cease after forty days.

The doctors of India use for those afflicted with hydrophobia a draught of the Indian *Ḥuḍaḍ* or *Ḥaḍaḍ*, a drachm of it upon an empty stomach for forty days, then the hydrophobia will cease. But it is not of the slightest advantage except it be accompanied by, what the *Fargân* do in our country, "ironing"

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

Some women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *timūs*, for which I read *kimūs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aswānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

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this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, and since the *Shabhaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have seen that *hashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *hashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish 10 276 114

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *hashish*; just as the *Shaikha Khadra* and her colleagues used *hashish* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbiya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāh*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shiha*.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE KARĪN AND KARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *karīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *karīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448-451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarīna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarīna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayūm and Asyūṭ Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarīna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *afrāh* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the [751] iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyūṭ Province and also from one in Fayūm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellâhîn*.[1]

FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *karîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Bahri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *karîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *karîn* and a woman a *karînah* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellâhîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

7: Riad E-4.5 (no date) 1960
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*407 184 handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the ploughand all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

197 184 *407 *Region Two :* Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e.g., « Wish » and « Wegh » or « Wijh » — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien » or « Gafaien » (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish » for the base, « Sikka » for the share, « Gabaien » for the handles, « Gasaba » for the beam, « Koraga » for the beam extension, and « Karab » for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences [197] from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Baharif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (c) of fig. 1 and map (c) of fig. 2. On map (c) fig. 1 we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Hadd ● [114] is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities -

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Keth and Beahan were given this terminology by Winkler[9]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennase, Abu Ibay, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramsh South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of « Weghe and « Wighe, for the base, « 'Amude instead of « Miftahe for the pin, and « Mindefe instead of « Weiare or « Barufe for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North.

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Region Three: Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area: a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide is to three sub-regions: Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity: the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolised in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have « Higre for beam, « Bagroma for pin, « Saffite for the beam extension, « Shaddabe for the cross peg of the beam extension, and « Danade for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins. [197]

[9] Winkler, 1936, p. 153.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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171 *407 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia, and says that an Egyptian governor of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dakhla and Kharga use a plough which at least in Kharga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts —for as such we would have found plough type V —but can only be explained by the human hand. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis [487] with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis.

PROSPECTS

241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood —with its renewal of the fertility —then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil —which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in souther Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil —which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqya». This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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[1] Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong [114] to the Egyptian type I, *i.e.*, the split handled plough.

[2] Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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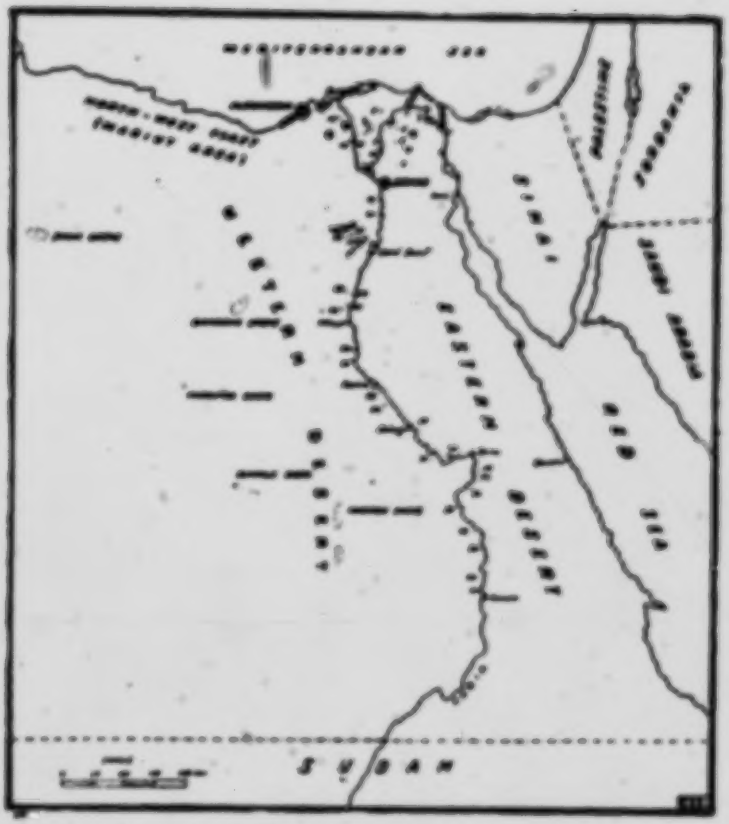

Fig. 4. Names of Localities where Studies on the plough were carried out.

[103]

1. Qattara West.
2. Gourmia.
3. Bacout.
4. Nub.
5. Ibrahimia.
6. 'Eshet Mahar.
7. Bilbeis.
8. Biyala.
9. Zefta.
10. Sa'ad Pasha.
11. Shoeny.
12. Mehlla.
13. Kawshank.
14. Sanhur.
15. Batna.
16. Tamaa.
17. 'Ayat.
18. Fidimin.
19. Sinoro.
20. Zeid.
21. Mun'aim.
22. Edeb'iy.
23. Beni Mazar.
24. Gebrous.
25. Shoubra.
26. Mallawi.
27. Gurf Sorbon.
28. Nadir Abdalla.
29. Ashad Mohammed.
30. El-Edo.
31. Ashad [illegible].
32. Abu Mosa.
33. Kombowat.
34. Kimas.
35. Sharqia.
36. El-'Ammari.
37. Nasrab.
38. Kelh.
39. Ramadi-South.
40. Sirsian.
41. Ashard la.

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The little collection which I herewith publish, doubtless makes known for the first time, a considerable series of songs of the peasants of Upper Egypt; for, as far as I know, there has, hitherto, been printed here and there, only an occasional song, for the most part of no particular content. 114

Although I hope that my book may also furnish material scientifically available, yet this has not been the motive for its publication. It is not intended as a book for scholars. I trust its perusal may be a pleasure to all travelers on the Nile, and to those who may be preparing themselves for the journey thither, as well as to any others who, upon their return home, would gladly be again reminded of the country and the people. Moreover, it may, perhaps, help all such to learn somewhat better how our brown friends think and feel, than it is possible to do by the mere reading of descriptions. For here the people themselves speak, and in words which were not calculated for their effect upon Europeans. Indeed, I think many will be pleasantly surprised by these songs. Of course they are of unequal merit, but I 114 114 121

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114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣir. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my informants was a Būṣiri (man of Abūṣir), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa"āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa"āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhim es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old rafir (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

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[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus, I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasye near Beni-Suëf.

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[194]

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once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

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114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, plural: fellāḥīn), made up of hard work and few pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

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it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

[1]) According to Mahmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognised outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

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461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
121 all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
● 114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

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its manifold cares, allowed me.[1] Moreover, I am entirely without previous training as an Arabist, since all that I know of the language, was learned during my two years' sojourn in Egypt, when the study of Arabic was merely an incidental matter. I am, therefore, greatly indebted to Professor Dr. A. Fischer, of Leipzig, for going to the trouble of looking through my "layman's-translations" and freeing them from a number of mistakes, both great and small. That the work, nevertheless, contains various mistakes, is due to the circumstances already mentioned, and we are both fully aware of them. What may be said of the songs from the standpoint of the Arabist, will be elsewhere stated by Professor Fischer[2], when he will also indicate where he does not agree with the translations and explanations which I have adopted. 114

I could almost wish that a good deal of fault may be found with my work, if it might prove true the German proverb: "Dass man der Dornen acht', das haben die Rosen gemacht." In Lane's classical book[3] we have a most excellent description of the life and customs of the inhabitants of Cairo. The treatment of the conditions in Upper Egypt is lim-

[1]) In No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, L. Borchardt gives a vivid description of a working-day.

[2]) For lesser contributions I am indebted to L. Borchardt as well as Professor Dr. Lippert.

[3]) An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. (London 1836; 1882; herein cited from the old edition.) [113]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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114 ited to a few pages, and yet it is just these which are vastly more important to us Egyptologists, for the history of culture. But the work of a layman's leisure hours can not produce a supplement to Lane.

Some young, efficient Arabist, with open eyes and a fondness for the land and inhabitants, and possessed of sufficient knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Coptic language, ought to bury himself for two or three years, in an Upper Egyptian village. I am convinced that this sacrifice would be richly repaid in regard to the Arabic language also. It can not be accomplished by mere visits during the season.[1]

Up to this time next to nothing has been done in this direction[2], and who knows when it may be too late?

It would please me most of all, if my book should prove an incentive for the production of a better one, which would form a companion-piece to G. Dalman's excellent "Palaestinischer Diwan" (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901).

Heinrich Schaefer.

Steglitz, June 13, 1902.

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[181] [1]) The Egyptians are much more unapproachable and reserved in many things than is apparent from slight contact.

[113] [2]) Klunzinger's splendid book: "Bilder aus Ober-Aegypten etc." (Stuttgart, 1877.) gives a great deal, but not all, by far, of the wealth of material.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In the preparation of the English edition of these songs, the translator has received from Professor Schaefer, a number of verbal remarks furnished by Dr. F. Kern; others from reviews by A. Nallino (Litterarisches Centralblatt); B. Meissner (Deutsche Litteraturzeitung 1904 p. 1493) and especially by K. Vollers (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft LVIII, p. 226), thus making possible many improvements upon the German edition. The author has also himself furnished numerous additional remarks and notes. The entire work of producing the English edition has been done under the most advantageous circumstances; constant consultation with the author, and frequent discussions of doubtful points have ensured much greater accuracy than would otherwise have been possible.

The English version of the songs is not merely a translation from the German; wherever necessary, the Arabic was consulted, and for this aid, besides the author, I am indebted to my husband, who also gave the translation a careful revision.

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114 [194] The reader should note that all the vowels in the transliteration have the sounds of Italian or continental vowels.

[192] The word, felläḥ, which has been translated: "peasant", means literally: plowman.

For the sake of preserving the play on words, so characteristic of the Arabic, it has sometimes been necessary to translate literally, where, in order to be perfectly intelligible, a foot-note was essential. (Numbers 34—35, "finished".)

Owing to the differences in our occidental, living arrangements, it has been difficult, in some instances, to preserve the comparisons which are more easily rendered in the German.

The task herewith completed, has given me unusual pleasure, since it has acquainted me with many things in the life of the people, which, during a winter in Egypt, entirely escaped me. I can only hope that the translation may render the same service to travelers in Egypt, as well as to all lovers of folk-lore.

Frances Hart Breasted.

Gross Lichterfelde, July 18, 1904.

8.Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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21.

Inattentive Devotions.

*539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communication of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqâziq (Za'ziq).

Daḫaltê bêt Alla,
la'it ḥamâm aḫḍar;
bila"amâ sukkar.
Ya rêtni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi zurto!*

I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. "It", that is, the house of Allah.

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40.

×539 304 852 The father hurries home to the festivity.

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābîš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adūit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands râqide instead of rāide.

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Calls of the Radish-Vender.

539x
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar". (F. Kern.) [114] [538]

Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
5 *nuṣṣ el-balad tishad-li,*
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
5 Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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55.

Arrogance.

×539 578 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ṛuzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Moḥammed Ali exterminated. For Maḥmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

[114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebīʿ er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ṛuzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ṛuzz (Mamaluke).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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72.

The Wakening of Love.

×539
832

Yamma, ya rigli, la"ha-lli māši.
ʿēn el-ʿarūse lil-ʿarīs bitrāši.
Ya lēl ṭūl, ya fegr ma-ṭʿallāšī,
lamma yenām el-ḫill waiye ḫalīlo,
5 *u-fa"aš er-rummān ʿala-l-furāšī.*

O mother, my foot! He who passes, has touched it!
The eye of the virgin weeps for her bridegroom.
O, night linger on, O, dawn come not nigh,
When my beloved sleeps with his companion,
And breaks open the pomegranates upon the pillow.

1. The passer-by wishes to enter into relations with her.
5. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.

73.

The Day That I Saw Thee . . .

[114] The beginning of a song which Vollers took down from the lips of a blind sailor, at Assuân in 1890. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. LVIII, 228.)

Yōm šuftak ḥabbētak ḫāliṣ,
u-saʿet-lak bil-widd el-ḫāliṣ.

The day that I saw thee, I loved thee dearly.
And I have sought thee with sincere love.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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81.

Wind and Love.

539x
832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The man is a watchman (ṛafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself. [192]

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7. [342]

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.] [114]

'Ali 'Elēwe banā-lo fil-gibāl iḥṣāṣ,
biddo yeḥāš el-hawa.
Hāwa el-hawa yinḥaš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
5 *weš-šōk lam yindās,*
wil-bint lam tinḥiṭib,
illa-blammet nās.

'Ali 'Elēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

89.

The Wind, the Rogue.

×539
821
[114]

Tantavy, in Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire, p. 222 (hence of the year 1848) has this same little song in a slightly varying form. According to that version we have inserted 'āni in our last line, in order to rhyme with gāni, instead of ḫāli as Maḥmūd gave it.

Ḥabaṭ el-hawa fil-bāb,
'ult el-helēwe gāni.
Atarīk, ya hawa, kaddāb,
beyiḍḥak 'ala-l-'alb el-'āni.

The wind knocked at the door,
And I said: "My little sweetheart has come to me."
Therefore art thou a rogue, O wind,
Who laughs at a grieving heart.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzî') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

53 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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134.

A Motto.

x539
114
517

When Maḥmûds stock of songs was exhausted, he came once again and dictated to me this song, in praise of the comfortable, dreamy mood, the "kēf", which the Egyptian loves so dearly. He insisted that I should place it as a sort of motto at the beginning of my book; he probably meant before the love-sonnets. (Maḥmûd called a love-song: ṛunet hawa).

Maḥlak, ya kēf,
'and arbab el-ṛarām, maḥlak!
Mašnak, ya kēf,
'and illi ma yidriku ma'nāk.

How sweet art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of lovers, how sweet!
How hateful art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of those, who understand not thy meaning!

4. . . . and therefore do not know what to do with thee.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events 843
in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and [842]
symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles
in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this
chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant [115]
divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. [753]
If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or [826]
abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and [262]
they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a [626]
common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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these tales, which he now relates to the people of his village in the evening. He also tells his tales to his customers, who often wait while he is dying the cloth which they have brought him. Thus some tedious hours of waiting are pleasantly whiled away.

538
115

When he first came to me he was somewhat shy, but after a while, seeing that I was really interested, he would start off without hesitation. Sometimes he would consult the schoolmaster as to what he thought would be most to my taste, giving him a short epitome of two or three stories. Then, when a suitable one was chosen, he would go ahead without further delay. Several stories were recited at a sitting, and occasionally I was writing them down for three or four hours on end. Our servants would often stand near, listening in breathless attention as the plot developed.

[291]

FIG. 153. STORY-TELLER, WHO IS ALSO A WATER-CARRIER BY TRADE

The next year I engaged another man, who was a water-carrier by trade (Fig. 153). I was then living in tents near an out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt, and the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) kindly placed his reception-room at my disposal. Wealthier villagers would drop in from time to time and take a seat at a respectful distance from me, while humbler folk stood at the doorway, or squatted on the threshold, all alike listening enthralled, and from time to time uttering ejaculations of appreciation.

I was assured that these tales had never been committed to writing, but had been handed down orally. It may interest my readers to peruse the following, selected from a large number in my possession.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

516
142
302
291
411
115

Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Mahmûd Mohammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣîr. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my informants was a Būṣîri (man of Abūṣîr), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa''āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa''āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhîm es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus, I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasya near Beni-Suēf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

GROWING UP IN AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE

Silwa, Province of Aswan

by

HAMED AMMAR
M.A., Ph.D. (London)

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL LTD
Broadway House, 68–74 Carter Lane
London

[Title Page]

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GROWING UP
IN AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE

[p. iii]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[p. iv]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

Foreword

In writing a foreword to Dr. H. M. Ammar's study of growing up in an Egyptian village, I am expressing in particular terms the general satisfaction which every university teacher feels when a field of research which he has been advocating for some time, is adopted, investigated and made the subject of an original study. Dr. Ammar's book was the result of an intensive period of field work in Egypt, preceded by systematic study in London where he formulated his theories, argued his premises in seminars, and examined the main approaches to his problems. He has done me the honour of referring to several of my published papers, and it is clear from these references and from the way in which he has handled his topic, that his research was directed towards the almost unexplored field of the social and psychological aspects of the training of children in a village community. The village of Silwa which he chose for his study was a community which in its social structure and economic life was, to a large extent, homogeneous. Though it was relatively isolated geographically, it was not unaffected by social change, and an important section of Dr. Ammar's book deals with the impact of a modern system of schooling on the outlook and activities of the villagers. 114

The publication of this study marks a second stage in the contribution of the University of London Institute of Education to this important field. In 1940, Dr. Otto Raum, also a former post-graduate student at the Institute, published his *Chaga Childhood*, the first full-scale study of indigenous tribal education undertaken at a British university. Dr. Raum's book was the first landmark in a new approach to the study of what had formerly been called 'Primitive Education'. In this book he related the process of training Chaga children in their own environment to the nature and activities of Chaga tribal institutions, and relied on the teaching and field work of social anthropologists, chiefly those of the functional school, for his theoretical guidance.

The focus of interest of scholars in this field, up to the publication of Dr. Raum's book in 1940, was in societies which were then designated as 'primitive'. Subsequent field studies, between 1940 and 1953, were almost exclusively confined to tribal societies, where the culture was enshrined in institutions, distinctive to, and dominant in, a particular tribe, and hence

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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114 limited to that tribal group and tribal area. The notable exceptions to the limitation to tribal societies were the American field studies in Indian communities in North, Central, and South America, and in Negro communities in the southern states. Only one piece of research, and that hardly an intensive village study, had been undertaken in the cultural areas dominated by the Islamic tradition, and none in the cultural areas of the Far East and South-East Asia.

Dr. Ammar's book is therefore a landmark in two respects. He has carried out research in child training in a village community dominated by the Islamic cultural pattern, and has established the validity of these studies in a society which shows many contrasts with tribal societies. He has also demonstrated an original line of research. His dominant interest lay in the problems of personality and culture. In his exploratory research he ranged widely in the modern anthropological studies of culture, and also in the inter-disciplinary approach to the study of personality. In his theoretical examination of his problems, and in the organization and analysis of his field work, he has brought together the contributions of social anthropologists and of psychologists, both British and American. In his capacity as a trained educationist he has focused these contributions on the dual aspect of education of the children in Silwa village, in its traditional and modern forms. It is this correlation of the study of traditional child training, in its setting of the village culture of Upper Egypt, with the examination of the impact of modern schooling on that village culture, which distinguishes Dr. Ammar's contribution to the progress of research in this field.

There have been relatively few intensive and localized studies of the part played by modern education in social change in Western Europe. There have been fewer still in tropical areas, and in those parts of the Middle and Far East where the form and content and methods of modern schooling have been to a large extent exported from Western Europe, or at least have received their initial impetus and imprint from that source. Dr. Ammar has also accepted the challenge of the need for research in this second unexplored field, which is necessarily correlated with the problems of cultural continuity in societies where a traditional form of social and economic life still persists. There is often a time-lag between the introduction of educational reforms and their full implementation, due to the reluctance to accept reforms by those elements in the population which regard imposed cultural changes of any kind as a threat to their security. Here Dr. Ammar has indicated further lines of research which are significant in all plans for educational advance.

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Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Government Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

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TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

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life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

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512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

562 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

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major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue. 562 183 184

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later. 369

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study. 121 [123]

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2] [184]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

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FIRST, I should like to express my thanks to my father and mother in Silwa who have patiently endured sacrifices for my education. To them I dedicate this book, and to the people of Silwa who, all the time the study was in progress, were wondering about the purpose of this work.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Prof. Margaret Read, who on all occasions has provided me with sound guidance and valuable advice. Without her keen insight and critical suggestions I would have been unable to see the 'wood'; and would have been lost among the 'trees'.

I should like also to express my gratitude to all those teachers whose ideas and suggestions, whether directly or indirectly, have influenced me in writing this book, especially the late Prof. Mannheim, Prof. Lauwerys, Prof. Fortes, and Prof. Sprott.

Last, but not least, I should like to pay tribute to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York) without whose generous aid the manuscript could not have been published. To the members of its Board, for their encouragement, I am extremely grateful.

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If there is not to be a wide gulf between the élite, and the ordinary run of people, then it is necessary that our cultural mentors should train themselves in a sympathetic sensibility towards the tastes . . . and the day-to-day habits of common folk. . . . What is rather needed is much more study of the nature of the impulses which the supposedly vulgar mass is obeying, and of the reasons why the impulses take the direction they do.

SIR FRED CLARKE, *Freedom in the Education Society.*

[p. xvii]

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Introduction

THEORETICAL LEADS AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

THIS is a study of the social and psychological aspects of education in a village community in which an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted. For the sociological part which forms the main body of the book, the writer has attempted to utilize many of the conceptual categories and methods usually employed in studies of total culture which aims at creating out of the diverse pieces of human realities 'a coherent representation of a society, in terms of the general principles of organization and motivation that regulate behaviour in it'.[1] To achieve this purpose, many of the theoretical assumptions utilized in research in Anthropology and Sociology have been applied, for 'there can be no valuable empirical observations without the lead of a theory'.[2] There is no claim of originality in the theoretical leads of this work, as the writer only attempted to examine 'how finely some tools given by wiser men might cut'. It is becoming increasingly important in any research to satisfy three main requirements; the first is to make explicit one's own assumptions that guided the work; the second is to describe the methods and techniques used; and the third is the extent to which one's ideas and methods have undergone change during the actual work, for research is equally a learning process for the person conducting it.[3] 121

Throughout the book the cultural approach has been the dominant one. The appreciation of 'culture' as a phenomenon *sui generis* and its explanatory value for the understanding of human behaviour have been one of the major achievements of modern anthropology.[4] There is no need here

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, London, 1945, Foreword, p. vii.

[2] B. Malinowski, in his preface to A. Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, London, 1932, p. xi.

[3] Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, New Haven, 1941, p. 6.

[4] In such a statement, it is recognized that the continuity of culture does not depend upon the existence of any particular individuals. Clyde Kluckhohn and William Kelly, 'The Concept of Culture', *The Science of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 78–106. However, there need be no contradiction between viewing culture as organic or personalistic and

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to discuss the development of this concept of culture; it is sufficient only to state the ways in which the term is to be used. Wherever possible, the writer has tried to perceive culture at its three levels, the functional, the historical and the psychological.

What Malinowski expressed as the functional point of view is concerned with the interrelatedness of the various institutions, social structures, artifacts, mental and moral disciplines in the life of the human group studied. The functional approach is basically 'holistic', and culture is conceived as an integral in which the various items are interdependent.[1] As the social system is not an aggregate, but an integrated whole, 'the function of a particular usage is the contribution it makes to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system'.[2]

The second level of 'culture' is the historical; time being as important as space. Temporal factors and historical determinants have been taken into account by many of the present-day 'functionalists' for the understanding of the social present and of the phenomena of social change.[3] [125] It would have been of great value if there had been historical records about the village under study; there are even no past statistics that might indicate the historical development of such social items as population, resources, division of land and the like. For the villagers, history is mainly [123] what is contained in the memories of the living generations through oral transmission, or what is communicated by the literate section of the community, e.g. smatterings of the history of the Arabs, the Prophet and the Saints. It is obvious, however, that the village cannot be considered as a self-contained structural unit but has to be related to the forces of the national history and their repercussions, if any, on the village.[4]

In dealing with the psychological level of culture, the trend is not so clear, since this approach is relatively recent. Moreover, the issue concerning the extent to which a sociological study of this kind should extend its inquiry into the psychological field has not been fully accepted.[5] Added

as super-organic or impersonalistic, provided we are aware that they are two different levels of abstraction, with the former being prior to the latter logically and genetically. David Bidney, 'Human Nature and the Cultural Process', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 380.

[1] B. Malinowski, article 'Culture' in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* and in *Scientific Theory of Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

[2] Radcliffe-Brown, quoted by E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, p. 54.

[3] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 60. For a criticism of the extreme functionalists who ignore the historical dimension see A. Victor Murray, 'The Limits of Functional Anthropology', in *Overseas Education*, Vol. X, 1938–9, pp. 41–5, and Max Gluckman, 'An Analysis of the Sociological Theories of Bronislow Malinowski', *Rhodes Livingstone Papers*, No. 16, O.U.P., 1949.

[4] Julian H. Steward, *Area Research* (Social Research Science Council), New York, 1950, p. 22.

[5] The British school of Anthropology, in contrast with the American school, is on the whole reluctant to include the 'subjective' psychological phenomena of 'culture' in its

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to this, is the fact that there is no single system of psychology which one could apply with scientific assurance; and even experimental psychology contains an air of unreality and artificiality with regard to cultural and social behaviour.[1] Yet the increasing attempts for rapprochement between the social sciences as an ideal to be achieved, as evidenced in the challenging literature already written, made the writer convinced of the value of an integrative approach in his study.[2]

Nadel, for instance, maintains that both the functional and historical approaches to culture imply, to a greater or lesser degree, the influence of psychological phenomena, but that in neither of them is the part played by psychology in human culture explicitly and openly recognized.[3] Moreover, many of the American anthropologists assert that 'there is more to any culture than meets the eye', and that the 'functionalists' have only confined themselves to the 'overt' or 'explicit' aspects of culture that lie open to observation. The data of culture, however, contain 'feelings', 'thoughts', and 'motivations' for which they suggested terms such as 'covert' or 'implicit' culture which is not synonymous with 'subjective'.[4] In this way society is likened to the individual, the understanding of whom does not only depend on what he can tell us, or what he knows about himself, but equally on what he is reticent about and what he does not know about himself, which is an important factor in his personality.[5]

The recent interest in the psychological phenomena of culture has produced a specific type of approach called the 'typological or characterological', expressed mainly in the writings of Mead, Benedict, and Bateson. The three writers in their statements have attempted to establish an analogy between the variations between cultural selectivity and the individuals' temperaments, thus bringing problems of psychology to the foreground in sociological research. According to Mead, 'each simple homogeneous culture can give scope only to a few of the varied human endowments, disallowing or penalizing others too antithetical to its major emphases to find room in its walls. Having originally taken its values from

orbit of inquiry and prefers to keep the two disciplines separate. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit.

[1] F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychological Methods and Anthropological Problems' in *Africa*, Vol. X, 1937, pp. 401–19.

[2] A plea for inter-disciplinary approach for 'the explanation and prediction of human behaviour, individual and collective' is made by John Gillin, 'A Unified Science of Human Behaviour' in *Social Forces*, Vol. XXVIII, October 1949, pp. 110–12. The same need runs through all the writings of Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London, 1946; *Man and Society*, London, 1946; his introduction to Viola Klein, *Feminine Character*, London, 1946. Studies towards the Integration of Social Science are carried out by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations; see its journal *Human Relations*.

[3] S. F. Nadel, 'The Typological Approach to Culture' in *Character and Personality*, Vol. V, 1937, p. 268.

[4] Covert—overt culture is Linton's term, and explicit—implicit is Kluckhohn's.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Covert Culture and Administrative Problems' in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943, pp. 213–29, and his review of Malinowski's 'Dynamics of Culture Change' in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LI, 1946, pp. 571–3.

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the values dear to some human temperaments and alien to others, a culture embodies these values more and more firmly in its structure, in its political and religious systems, in its art and literature, and each new generation is shaped firmly and definitely to the dominant trends.'[1] For Benedict, cultural configurations are mere expressions of autonomous psychological trends, leading to the integration of culture and producing the 'ideal type' and the 'deviant'. In this way, the typical personality amongst the Plains Indians is somewhat manic or Dionysian, while that of the Zuni Indians is self-effacing or Apollonian.[2] Bateson explains culture change as the appropriateness of such a given change to the properties and 'genius' of the culture concerned. The circularity between the individual and his society must mean that 'the culture in some way affects the psychology of the individuals, causing whole groups of individuals to think and feel alike. A culture perpetuates itself through education, inducing and promoting certain types of psychological processes, or by selection, favouring those individuals who have an innate tendency to psychological processes of a certain kind.'[3]

The exponents of the 'culture pattern theory' have been subjected to various criticisms. The type of integration they infer is 'impressionistic' and oversimplified. Other critics maintain that the patterns formulated are of an 'aesthetic nature' rather than scientific, and that pattern-consciousness is a product of the mind of these writers and not necessarily derived from the cultural data observed.[4] If this 'pattern-formation' is based on an analogy with the individual, psychologists, and especially clinical psychologists, categorically deny the fact that there is an individual who is 'fully integrated' or 'inherently harmonious'.[5] As one of the most trenchant critics of the cultural pattern theory, Nadel finds it something of a miscellany made up of various cultural sectors and forces, e.g. unconscious choices, tacit impulses and diffuse emotional motives, rational purposes, and moral values and judgments.[6] If some kind of integration is necessary for the survival of society, it does not necessarily have to be focused on one *idée fixe*, a single attitude or value about which the rest of cultural content is organized. 'Many cultures seem to include a considerable number of attitudes and values all of which are significant, and each of which serves as a focal point for the integration of a different sector of the total culture.'[7]

[1] Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, London, 1935, Introduction.

[2] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, London, 1949.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, Cambridge, 1936, p. 113.

[4] Petrim Sorokin, *Society, Culture and Personality*, New York, 1947, pp. 337–41, reviews the various concepts of integrations and attempts to establish the criteria of causal-functional and meaningful logico-aesthetic integration. See also S. F. Nadel, op. cit.

[5] Géza Roheim, *Psycho-Analysis and Anthropology* (*Culture, Personality and the Unconscious*), New York, 1950.

[6] *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, pp. 391–2.

[7] Ralph Linton in Abraham Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, New York, 1939, Foreword, p. ix.

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While the 'typologists' have carried their concept of integration to that length, the critics of their approach however have not abandoned the concept of 'the unitary character of society', not on a single value or affect, but in a threefold frame of reference, including the integration of purposes, a pattern of psychological nature and a pattern of logical consistency. With the alignment, coincidence, and interrelation of these facets of culture, its possible unity and consistency emerge as an outcome of analysis and social understanding. In this way, certain constellations of cultural behaviour could be solely and intelligibly understood in terms of either logical consistency or rational purposes, implying some measure of fitness between this type of behaviour and its psychological functions. However, certain actions cannot be explained in the light of these two categories, being irrational or non-logical, and in such cases psychological explanations are required and appropriate.[1]

With this frame of reference, it would be possible to conceive different expressions in cultural contents as well as selected biases and 'preferred persistent tendences' as put forward by Bartlett.[2] From Nadel and Linton, the writer finds his most satisfactory theoretical explanations for the selectivity of culture and for the interlocking of its contents, and he turns now to search for his leads with regard to the various methods used by a society for its cultural continuity. This leads to the vast field of culture, personality, and national character studies which has been extending so rapidly during the last ten years. The purpose of these studies is to ascertain how various cultures affect the personality of their individuals, producing different personality structures. What is meant here by the personality is neither the autonomous nor the purely biological or universal characteristics of the individual. Personality must be viewed primarily as a configuration of responses which an individual has developed as a result of his experience.[3] With Linton's masterly analysis of the relation between culture and personality, it is only important here to note that by the explanatory concept of personality we mean the 'typical individual' or, according to Bartlett, 'the Social Personality'.[4] It is impossible to give here any adequate review of such studies, but it could be stated that they bring out the impact of culture, the ways it conditions individual behaviour, motivations, perception, and attitudes, and portray the cultural forces

[1] S. F. Nadel, op. cit., Chapter xiii.

[2] F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering*, London, 1932, p. 255.

[3] R. Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality*, London, 1947, p. 83. G. Bateson, 'The Cultural Determinants of Personality', in McV. Hunt (ed.), *Personality and Behaviour Disorders*, Vol. XI, New York, 1944. P. Sorokin, likening the newly-born baby to a phonograph, says with reference to the biological endowments that 'a well-constructed phonograph, to be sure, plays any record better than a poorly constructed phonograph. . . . But what "socio-cultural records" he will play (whether a Beethoven symphony or jazz) are dependent relatively little on the biological factors and are acquired mainly through the process of interaction with other human beings.' Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 5.

[4] 'Personality Structure', like 'culture', is an abstraction, based on the observation of the 'norm' in variations of behaviour exhibited by individuals.

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121 producing a type of personality with 'predictable behaviour'.[1] Many of these studies, under the influence of the Freudian psychology, lay their emphasis on child-rearing practices, such as sphincter control, the weaning situation or manner of swaddling, as the basic determinant of adult personality or national character, or as ultimate causes of Japan's or Germany's going to war.[2] Moreover, many of these studies ignore or attribute little importance to social institutions, value systems, and forces of history, economics, and politics. One of the most sober and balanced approaches to this question is that of Kluckhohn and Leighton in their writings on the Navaho.[3]

This approach of Culture-Personality brought to the forefront the problems involved in the individual's development and his adaptation to the cultural situation in the process of growing up. Some social anthropologists, such as Firth and Richards, have described 'what' is transmitted to the growing child during his life cycle, but 'how' the transmission of the cultural heritage takes place has received less attention.[4] According to Kardiner, the 'minutiae' of the cultural procedures are as important as the end-product to the understanding of both culture and personality formation.[5] It is only recently that anthropology, enriched by personality psychology and psycho-analytical concepts, has concerned itself with the genetic development of cultural norms, attitudes, and skills in the growing individual. This type of approach, with its varying emphases, is sometimes called 'diachronic', explaining how an antecedent condition of society is converted into some subsequent condition and thus includes the study of individuals.[6] In the 'synchronic' approach, however, culture is regarded as something 'given' and as a matter of adult transmission from one group to another and from one generation to another. 'The supposed "givenness" of culture is the most serious obstacle to our real understanding of culture and culture change and their relationship to individual personality. . . . From the culture-acquiring child point of view, we find that culture is

[1] For a valuable collection of articles on this theme of 'Culture-Personality' see Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray (ed.), *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, New York, 1948. For a good bibliography and survey of studies on national character see Julian H. Steward, ibid., pp. 75–83, and G. Bateson, 'Morale and National Character', in Godwin Watson, *Civilian Morale*.

[2] An extreme example of this approach is Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People*, New York, 1948, and in collaboration with J. Rickman, *The People of Great Russia*, London, 1950. For a specific type of approach to national character see Raymond B. Cattell, 'The Dimensions of Culture Patterns by Factorization of National Characteristics', in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October 1949.

[3] A. and D. Leighton, *The Navaho Door*, Harvard University Press, 1945. A. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *The Children of the People*, Harvard, 1948.

[4] See Meyer Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, London, 1938, p. 6.

[5] A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, New York, 1945, p. 4.

[6] M. Mead, 'Character Formation and the Diachronic Theory', in M. Fortes (ed.), *Social Structure*, Oxford, 1949, p. 18.

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something to be gradually and gropingly explored and discovered'[1] 121

This approach has resulted in a number of studies on the 'socialization' and the 'growing up' of the individual in his or her cultural context, showing how the child in its development gradually approximates to the general orientations of the social personality of the mature adult. In this manner, these studies directly touch the educational issues involved in social and cultural adaptation. They bring to the forefront the ways in which the individual becomes a culture-carrier and a culture-modifier. The details of the learning process, 'the cultural shaping of appetites', the social disciplines, and the system of reward and punishment, all find their place in the study of socialization, through which cultural transmission is made possible by replacing 'outer force' by 'inner compulsion'. In this manner the link between 'culture' and 'education' becomes obvious, and the approaches of cultural anthropology and sociology can be greatly relevant to educational questions.

This process of replacing the social force by individual acceptance of a basic minimum of conformity has led to the adoption of certain theoretical concepts and findings of psychology by some social anthropologists. In this particular field of child development, the work of psycho-analysts and clinical psychologists has been the most relevant to anthropologists. Some of their findings, believed to be universal with regard to characteristics of adolescence or the absolute connection between toilet training, early infantile experience, and character traits, have been checked and modified by anthropologists working in cultures different from the European background.[2]

However, the orthodox psycho-analytical emphasis on childhood experiences to the minimization of later possibilities of re-education has been criticized by many psychologists and psycho-analysts of the so-called 'Neo-Freudian' school, with its sociological orientation.[3] Whatever the criticism of clinical psychology may be, the writer accepts their assumption that childhood training and disciplines form one of the resources of society for channelling human energy into the preferred cultural responses. The position of psycho-analysts sophisticated with the findings of social anthropology is made clear in Erikson's recent work on *Childhood and Society* from which the following statement has been taken in connection with education amongst the Sioux Indians:

'A first impression suggests that the cultural demand for generosity received its early foundation from the privilege of enjoying the nourishment and reassurance emanating from the unlimited breast-feeding; while the necessity of suppressing the biting rage contributed to the tribe's always ready ferocity.

[1] E. Sapir, 'The Emergence of the Concept of Personality in a Study of Cultures' in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. V, 1943, pp. 408–15.

[2] M. Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, New York, 1946.

[3] Famous amongst these 'Neo-Freudians' are Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and Abram Kardiner.

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121 'We are not saying here that their treatment in babyhood causes a group of adults to have certain traits—as if you turned a few knobs in your child-training system and you fabricated this or that kind of tribal or national character. In fact we are not discussing traits in the sense of irreversible aspects of character. We are speaking of goals and values and of the energy put at their disposal by child-training systems. Such values persist because public opinion continues to consider them "natural" and does not admit of alternatives. . . . But values do not persist unless they work, economically, psychologically and spiritually, and I argue that to this end they must continue to be anchored, generation after generation, in early child-training; to remain consistent, must be embedded in a system of continued economic and cultural syntheses. For it is the synthesis operating within a culture which increasingly tends to bring into close-knit thematic relationship and mutual amplification such matters as climate and anatomy, economy and psychology, society and child-training.'[1]

Kardiner, in collaboration with Linton, is perhaps one of the most important clinical psychologists who have applied psycho-analysis to the study of culture. He developed the concept of basic personality structure, an abstraction which can be deduced from the content and organization of a culture, with a kind of dialectic between it and the cultural institutions. Kardiner maintains that, in this way, his scheme is interactional and dynamic, as 'changes in certain institutions result in changes in basic personality structure, while such basic personality changes, in turn, lead to the modification and reinterpretation of existing institutions'.[2] Kardiner and Linton themselves are aware of the difficulties in their concept of the basic personality structure and especially that of equating it with the personality of the individuals of that society. Its advantage, however, over the framework of the culture pattern exponents, is that it groups together certain interrelated items of behaviour and treats them as units. A number of institutions and constellations of institutional behaviour may be orientated towards food, another towards sex, and a third towards attitudes arising out of childhood training. This concept of the 'basic personality structure' takes into account the varied range of cultural institutions with such values as rank, prestige, and status. Such an approach renders it possible to make certain predictions about the institutions which such a personality structure is likely to invent, accept, or reject.[3] Unlike the orthodox psycho-analysts, Kardiner includes in his scheme the boon of culture as well as its discontents, as evidenced in his emphasis on the term 'ego structure' rather than 'the libidinal ties'.[4] He places adequate emphasis on the social

[1] Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, London, 1950, pp. 121–2.
[2] R. Linton in Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. vii.
[3] A. Kardiner, *Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 29.
[4] In this way he accepts the functionalist approach, in which culture is viewed as increasing the individual power of achievement, an 'initial instalment' of freedom as well

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forces, although here the interaction of the basic personality structure on the cultural institutions has not been worked out satisfactorily. His methodology of culture analysis on the criteria of security systems, sexual controls, points of tension, satisfaction of dependency cravings, social disciplines, fantasy gratification provides possible and feasible 'pegs' for constellations of human behaviour. It also provides a scope for a better understanding of certain universal features of culture, such as dreams and folklore, in a functional way, by establishing their linkage with other cultural constellations.[1] Thus, in this work, many of Kardiner's constructs have been utilized for the explanation of certain aspects of our data, especially in connection with folk and children's tales, dreams, food anxieties, and sexual behaviour.

The field methods used in this study are those of the current anthropological repertory depending mainly on hearing and seeing through participant observation, informants, and asking questions of many adults and children on certain problems and to check data given by informants.[2] For information about children, the Kuttabs and the elementary school were available centres together with a 'children's hour' organized in the writer's house to which children between seven and twelve years old came on three occasions. It was impossible to stimulate adolescent interest in such a gathering, partly because of their economic responsibilities, and partly because of their excessive shyness and reserve, and this perhaps accounts for the thinness of our observations concerning this age group. Intelligence tests, Stewart Emotional Response, Moral Ideology, Story Completion and Rorschach tests, were administered to children, with the exception of the last test which included adults as well.

A preliminary statement about the choice of certain psychological tests is necessary here to indicate the extent of their relevance to our study. The Moral Ideology, the Emotional Response, and the Story Completion tests are intended to reveal some of the norms and the attitudes which children acquire at various stages of development and some of their

as restricting individual impulses for the purposes of social action. See Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, London, 1947, p. 31. Freud has emphasized the inhibitory and restrictive forces of culture (Super-Ego). See his book *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[1] For criticisms of the Kardiner-Linton approach see S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 493–8; Henry Ozanne, 'Synthesis in Social Sciences', in *Sociometry*, Vol. VIII, 1945, pp. 208–15, where he maintains that Kardiner's interpretations of the primitive cultures studied, though feasible and meaningful, are only possible explanations and are not necessarily ones arising from the material concerned. As a psychologist he, like some anthropologists, objects to the superimposition of psychological categories, conceptualized in terms of the individual, on sociology, which conceptualizes in terms of the group. See also L. M. Hanks in his review of Kardiner, 'The Individual and His Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. XII, 1940, p. 475, where he emphasizes the importance of behaviour and attitudes falling outside the range defined by institutional behaviour.

[2] For an assessment of my informants, see Appendix I. See also Audrey T. Richards, 'The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett, London, 1939.

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125 reactions and sentiments for different situations. These tests are also expected to draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape his notice.

The Projective Test of the Rorschach Ink Blots is growing in popularity as a technique in field work especially amongst those anthropologists who are concerned with the relations between culture and personality. The test is intended to reveal 'the basic organization of the personality structure, including the fundamental affective and cognitive features of mental life'.[1] In spite of many difficulties and limitations in applying such a test, some Rorschach researchers, working with anthropologists, have noted that the principles of the test could be applied with some validity in cross-cultural situations.[2]

Our purpose in administering Intelligence tests was not primarily for inter-group comparisons, but mainly to elicit information regarding the mental 'orientation' characteristic of the group. Three types of tests were selected, verbal (Kabbani's test for primary school children), a paper and pencil test (Porteus Maze), and a practical performance test (Alexander's pass-along). The assumption is that the significant differences in the score of these tests would be considered as different adjustment to different test material and situations. This could be legitimately regarded as reflection of specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence. In a study of the effects of culture upon children's thoughts and actions, these data are deemed relevant to our purposes.[3]

124 Our methods lack the sociological depth afforded by the gathering of life histories, and intensive case studies of families and individuals supplementing a more diffused and general study of a greater number of individuals. Resistance was expected and encountered in such attempts, even with my informants as shown in Appendix I. Various reasons can be given for such resistance. They were ill at ease at doing things for research, reluctant to engage in an activity which might be considered as dangerous gossip, especially when recorded on paper, and might reach official circles. [156] Their attitude is that personal problems should be 'covered' and not 'exposed' to others. Perhaps their interest was not sufficiently stimulated, for they would ask me, 'And what is the use of all this to us?' It became 123 obvious to me during my field work that in order to get the full co-operation of the people for such research, it was necessary to be able to help them in their everyday problems. One villager expressed this in a candid way: 'You must now be useful to us as we have been helpful to you.' A similar observation has been made by Oscar Lewis, who advocates, on the basis of his experience in Tepoztlan, the combination of research

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*, New York, 1946 edition, p. ix.
[2] Cora du Bois, *The People of Alor*, University of Minnesota Press, 1944, p. 589.
[3] S. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, pp. 184-97. For a full account of these tests and their application and findings, see Appendices.

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and service programmes as an excellent way of integrating the fields of 123
both applied and theoretical Anthropology.[1] This constraint and fear of
divulging personal information could be also attributed to the vulnerability 156
of the villagers' ego-structure, to which we shall refer later.[2]

What relevance have such assumptions and approach to a study in
education? A great part of the answer to such a question must be obvious 121
by now. If education, in its broadest sense, is the process of transmitting the cultural contents, values, attitudes, and the body of technical and social experience from one generation to another, surely the sociological approach is of the greatest value in educational research and educational policies. As Sir Fred Clarke expressed it, culture is the whole life-medium, and not the background with which education is concerned.[3] Formal educational institutions, from schools to universities, are only one transmissive agent of any nation's 'way of life'. Our approach does not preclude the assumption that they are amongst the most efficient means of such transmission or that they are also a potent force in effecting social change. Here we are mainly concerned with education as the means of cultural continuity, of building social solidarity and cohesion. It is probably because of uncritical faith in schools and other formal educational institutions that this transmissive role of education has been ignored. This is vaguely felt when some educationists go to the extreme and advocate leaving children absolutely free for the development of their peculiarities of interest and behaviour. Such are rightly designated as cranks. Apart from those who entertain the ideas of Rousseau's Emile, 'we are well aware that children learn their patterns of social behaviour, their ideas on family life and earning a living, their value systems in relation to social and economic life, far more extensively and intensively outside school than inside'.[4] Society thus keeps itself as a going concern by educating its individuals to its established and time-tested ways of believing, feeling, thinking, and reacting for purposes of social action.[5]

Looking at education from this viewpoint may perhaps be disheartening to those educational planners and administrators who are anxious to go

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Introduction, p. xv.

[2] Differences between cultures are also reflected in the varying ease with which field workers could procure life-histories. This point was brought to my attention by Cora du Bois who mentioned to me the striking difference in this connection between the flow of the Navaho and the constraint of the Alorese. Of course, my informants, being related to me, would not have accepted money, but perhaps other services. In such a community, [124] people would not accept financial recompense for information given to one from the village itself. In case of an outsider, such payment might be a good incentive in a community which jealously guards against the divulging of personal and family privacies. For motivation of informants see S. F. Nadel, 'The Interview in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett.

[3] Sir Fred Clarke, *Freedom in the Educative Society*, London, 1948.

[4] Paper read by M. Read before the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Edinburgh, August, 1951.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, New York, 1949, p. 188.

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12 ahead with the job, but, as Karl Mannheim repeatedly emphasized, 'no educational activity or research is adequate in the present stage of consciousness unless it is conceived in terms of sociology of education'. 'Society blindness' or lack of 'social awareness' may lead to totalitarianism, or at least to educational malaise and wishful thinking.[1]

This sociological approach to education has stimulated few studies for the evaluation of educational systems and policies as a function of a certain social order. In his *Education and Social Change* Sir Fred Clarke has shown that, in England, although many formulations about educational policy are consistently adopted in practice, they are yet less explicitly recognized in theory. Such policies and practices taken for granted are nonetheless potent in shaping the trends of English education, and his book consists of an analysis of the social and historical determinants of the educational system. He also made a plea for examining the various types of educational institutions and for analysing the extent to which they have reflected certain characteristics of English life.[2]

For the United States, the book entitled *Who Shall be Educated?* is an example of a sociological approach to the function of the public school system in the American society. It shows how only partly true is the Americans' faith that their education system provides everybody with an equal chance to the realization of the 'American dream'. The authors, on the basis of their sociological findings, maintain that the American educational institutions cannot be satisfactorily explained by such labels as the democratic spirit, the American Constitution, or equality of educational opportunities, but must be examined in the light of the status system which operates in the lives of American children. The freedom of educators and administrators who conceive of the educational system as serving democratic purposes is hedged about by certain irreducible stubborn facts about human beings, social institutions and the spheres of valuations within them.[3] After describing some case studies of children, the authors observe that 'even at the early age of ten or twelve, these children all were travelling different paths of life. The school, with its common life, brought most of them together and gave them a common experience and a common literacy. But, as Miss Crane (their teacher) knew, the prescribed social lines of the community fell upon them and even influenced their learning in school. What a given child learned was not in Miss Crane's power to determine. She could try to teach them all the same things, but they would not learn the same things.'[4]

In the light of such facts, the authors conclude that it is desirable to gear the selecting machinery of educational institutions to the demands and capacity of the social structure. If too few people are selected and

[1] K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, London, 1943.
[2] Sir Fred Clarke, *Education and Social Change—An English Interpretation*, London, 1940.
[3] By W. Lloyd Warner, Robert Havighurst and Martin B. Loeb, London, 1946.
[4] W. Lloyd Warner *et al.*, op cit., p. 15.

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promoted through the educational system, the upper levels will be filled through other agencies and perhaps filled with people not properly trained. If too many are selected and pushed up, competition will become fierce for the higher jobs; some people will have to accept jobs below the level for which they are trained, and will consequently become frustrated and cynical. The authors assert: 'We need to see more clearly that various sub-groups in our society can aim at different goals and that it is not necessary for everyone to shoot for the top.' A certain amount of social mobility seems necessary to maintain cohesion; a large measure of it would spell social instability and too little would give rise to dissatisfaction.[1]

A more functional approach has been adopted in a project carried out by the American Youth Council in connection with the Negroes in the United States. The project has centred around the question 'How does the fact of being born a Negro affect the developing personality of a boy or a girl?' In this manner the writers attempted to show the relation between the home environment and the school. We cannot review the findings of these studies here.[2] It is only relevant to refer to them as another example of the increasing awareness to the importance of sociological research for programmes of educational reconstruction.

With these assumptions of theory and methods of research, this study has been written with the transmissive function of education as the centre around which the village institutions, value-systems, attitudes and aims and methods of 'growing up' are arranged. Education here is considered in its two aspects. The first, the technical, consists in acquiring the skills and techniques which enable the individual to become socially useful and a productive member, contributing to the group wealth and strength. The second aspect, which Kluckhohn calls the regulatory training, is the society's means of reducing as much as possible the individual's 'nuisance value' within the group and of promoting to the maximum social cohesion.[3]

Moreover, studies of this kind would help in evaluating or at least viewing in perspective the national policy in education. What is the function of the modern system of schools and universities in Egyptian society? To what extent are these institutions functionally related to the needs of

[1] It must be noted here that the frame of reference of this book is status and rank and their effect on equality of educational opportunity in the American class-structured society. The same approach has been adopted by Warner and others in their studies in the Yankee City series.

[2] This series contains five volumes:

Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage* (American Council of Education), Washington, 1940.

Franklin Frazier, *Negro Youth at the Crossways*, 1940.

Charles Johnson, *Growing Up in the Black Belt*, 1941.

Lloyd Warner, Buford Junker and Walter Adams, *Colour and Human Nature*, 1941.

Robert Sutherland, *Colour, Class and Personality*, 1942.

[3] The distinction between these two aspects of education is made by Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, p. 190. A similar distinction is also made by M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland.*

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[21] cultural continuity and social change? How can modern schooling be organized to promote economic productivity? Does the national system of education operate within the traditional value system and social sanctions, and if not what does it offer instead? Of course, these issues cannot be answered in this book, for we are mainly concerned with the educative process of the traditional pattern in a community which is hardly influenced by modern schooling.

In summary we may say that this is an attempt to study childhood in an [23] Egyptian village community. Children are not only observed in school or classroom, but also in their everyday life within the social group in which they live, work, play, and move. As far as is known to the writer there have been no studies of this kind, except a few autobiographies written by some eminent writers.[1] Such autobiographies, however, must be regarded, if to be made use of in sociological studies, in the light of two main reservations. The first is the therapeutic manipulation of the writer's memory for certain experiences, and the second is the requirements of literary style.[2]

[1] See, for example, Taha Hussain, *al Ayyam* (in Arabic), translated into English by E. H. Paxton, *An Egyptian Childhood*, London, 1932. Ahmad Ameen, *Hayati* (*My Life*), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic). Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story*, London, 1946.

[2] See Margaret Mead, 'Research on Primitive Children', in L. Carmichael, *Manual of Child Psychology*, New York, 1946, pp. 694–5.

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PART ONE

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Chapter One

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

THE natural resources, methods of production, means of livelihood and property system of any community provide a tangible mechanism which regulates and gives stability to the relations between its members in accordance with the value system governing that culture.[1] In Silwa, the village community under study, agriculture is the basic activity of the great majority of the population.

According to the 1947 Census the distribution of occupations in Silwa is as follows:[2]

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*
Farmers	1288	1451
Industrial workers	47	84
Masons	47	0
Transport	36	0
Trade	60	1
Personal servants	10	387
Servants in Govt. offices and other social services	78	1
Unproductive and undefined jobs	272	86
Unemployed	292	317
TOTAL: 4457	2130	2327

Taking this table as a criterion for village occupations, it is clear that more than 60 per cent of the total population are engaged in agriculture. Yet the official census does not define its categories of occupation, and is

[1] Ernest Beaglehole, *Property, A Study in Social Psychology*, London, 1931.
[2] *Population Census, 1947* (Book I, Province of Aswan), Government Press, Cairo, 1951, p. 25.

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463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half [323] a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1946.

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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors. 465 [792]

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill. 463 [256] [477]

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people. [312] [465]

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month. 443 [609] [452]

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders. [439]

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

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463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [609] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [499] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the [299] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [291] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such 198 as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by [609] outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [499] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [592] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect

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one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

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small landholders. Three decades ago, the head of one family owned about thirty acres, but after his death the land was divided into smaller plots between his inheritors. At present, apart from two outside landowners who possess about sixty acres in the village, and ten other villagers who each own more than five feddans, all the rest own less than five feddans. If the total arable land, estimated at 1350 acres, were distributed among the total population of 4450 people approximately, the *per capita* share would be little less than third of an acre (seven kirats) or 0·58 crop area *per capita*, which is slightly higher than the crop area *per capita* for the whole country, i.e. 0·46.[1] Moreover, the soil of the cultivable land in the village represents the average soil in the country, judging by its taxable power, which ranges from eighty to a hundred piastres.

At this juncture, it is relevant to mention that according to the Koranic law, at the death of man or woman, his or her property is shared by all the children of the deceased. We cannot go into the various details of the intricate Moslem law of inheritance, but shall refer to some of its significant principles. A female gets a share half that of the male. The inheritance should always be awarded to the 'asaba, the patrilineal line, however distant its members may be (apart from the wife, if she lives after her husband). The law recognizes the equivalence of siblings of the same sex, and it gives no privileges to primogeniture.

During the father's life, his children, whatever their age or status, have no legal right to own any of his property.[2] Whether to divide the land each attending to his share independently, or to keep it intact and farm it co-operatively, depends on the relationship between the heirs.[3] Many factors are involved, such as the existence of half-siblings (brothers or sisters by the father only), where the possibility of division is very great, on the relations of wives and in-laws, on the father's treatment of his children while alive, and so forth. If the land as the symbol of family unity is tilled co-operatively, the married sisters then get their land produce

[1] The 'crop area' unit is used instead of the acre because of the existence of the two systems of irrigation in various parts of the country, and hence the crop area gives a more accurate estimate of the cultivable land. For the whole country it is calculated that the land yields an average of a crop and a half per acre. For the whole country the population is 19,090,000, the cultivated area per acres, 5,585,300, and crop area 8,815,900 (Census 1947).

[2] See S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*, London, 1931.

[3] The fear of division and perhaps the forgetting of one's name in the family has led some of the landowners to consecrate land, for all the members of his family of the patrilineal descent, which could not be owned separately, and should pass, as left, intact to the second generation and the third and so on. This type of land is called 'Wakf Ahli—family endowment', to differentiate it from Wakf Khairi—charitable endowment, consecrated for religious purposes and looked after by the Ministry of Charitable Endowments. The abuses in running these estates led the new regime that followed the abdication of ex-King Farouk to pass a law dissolving the charitable endowments (September 1952). According to this law these estates are to be distributed among the legal heirs as specified by the Islamic law of inheritance.

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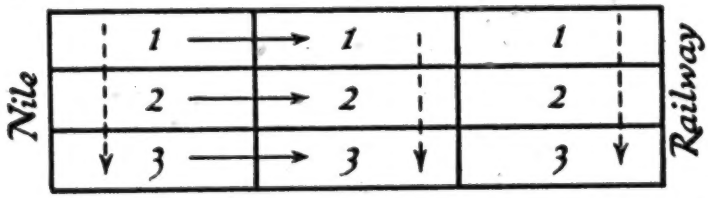
428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are [651] fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than [578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' [311] division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging [425] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellahen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

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the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

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On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

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It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution. [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

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883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes.

[202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being less embarrassed, less inquisitive,

[312] and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

In the absence of older sisters

[372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

Towards the end of this period he

[241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

On the whole for him this is a

[868] stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

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[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [922]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah"—the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [594] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values/

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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [594] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [461]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertiliser he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their [119] nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger [554] is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate [117] villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money [464] to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

476 Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'. 626

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself. 146 261

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread. 262 [594] [586]

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop. 251 602 621 [426]

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal. 264

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the 264 594

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the women-folk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

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182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such mal-[656] distribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

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1859 required that land in the villages be entered in the Government Land Register. This enforcement of registration resulted in many head clans, or village sheikhs (headmen) entering as much as they could of the village land as their property; in other cases, many owners had to abandon their land for fear of taxation.[1]

Moreover the great stretches of land recovered by Muhammad Ali and his successors were given over tax free to some wealthy notables and foreigners, and this group constitutes part of the big landowners in Egypt at present.[2]

[1] Alfred Bonne, *State and Economics in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] It must be noted here that after the completion of this work, the system of land ownership in Egypt has undergone radical change, a measure which was overdue for the establishment of the foundations of social justice. The abdication of ex-King Farouk and the seizure of power by the Army in July 1952 marked a new era in the life of the country. The new regime made land reform a central issue in its programme and passed the Law of Agrarian Reform. This law decreed that no landowner should possess more than 200 acres. Large estates over this size are to be expropriated with reasonable compensation for the owners. The expropriated land is to be distributed over a period of five years to landless villagers, to agricultural workers and to farmers with holdings less than five acres. For the full text of the law, see R. el-Barrawy, *The Military Coup in Egypt*, Cairo, 1952.

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Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 32–3.

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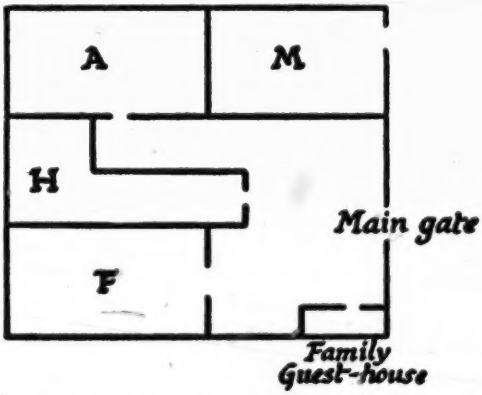
as married boys can have no property

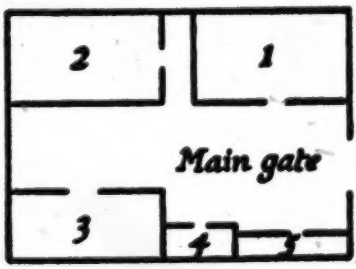
of their own as long as their father is alive, they have to live and work with him. Whether two married brothers with their families form one family living in one household, depends on whether they work co-operatively on the land after their father's death or whether they divide it. The family as an economic unit is identified with its common entrance to the house. This entrance must be distinguished from many houses which have a single main gate behind which there are other entrances. The main gate could be identified with the extended family whose members no longer form an economic unit. 592 596

The following sketch illustrates a typical example of a compound of an extended family. 596



X, the father of A, M and F and the grandfather of H, was the owner of this house site. After his death the two brothers M and A, their sister F and their nephew H wanted to divide their inheritance. During their prolonged quarrel over the land, they divided the house amongst them. As M was so annoyed with his brother A he decided not to enter the house from the same door A used, and built a separate entrance for himself. A, H and F, although constituting separate economic family units, still share the same main entrance and the compound is referred to as X's house. [578]

The following household forms one economic unit in spite of the different members composing it. 592



1 represents the part of the head of the family with his unmarried children; 2 represents his mother and his widowed sister who have both transferred their land to the head of the family; 3 represents his half-sister, who is also a widow and has a young

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592 daughter; 4 his son and wife; 5 place reserved for animals. In this case, the half-sister has not transferred her share of land to her brother but rents it to him.

596 There is no institutionalized economic co-operation between the members of an extended family, if they are not living in one house. If they are on good terms, economic mututal assistance in borrowing money, animals, or crops may take place. Indeed it is significant that the extended family is not resorted to as much for economic help as has been expected. The economic strength of the extended family and the harmonious relationships between its members are not what is usually assumed by writers on social affairs in Egypt.[1]

However, the unity of the extended family is expected in questions related to public and formal occasions. The extended family is publicly responsible for the general conduct and certain disciplinary measures to redress the offences of its members against law and order, as we shall see later. Members of the extended family are also expected to render support to each other on occasions of offering hospitality, at circumcision, wedding
[613] or funeral ceremonies. On the whole, the extended family could be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal economic family and the clan, shouldering the social responsibility for the smaller units and held accountable for their behaviour before the clan. It is only on the social level of public issues that public opinion in the village considers the family as a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses.[2]

613 The extended families merge into the clan, and the village is composed
616 of nine clans (kabail), each tracing its descent in the patrilineal line to one common ancestor. Further, the nine clans are grouped in two main sections (hissa), each section belonging to a common progenitor, the two progenitors being brothers. One section is called 'Onab related to 'On, the brother of Mousa who is the progenitor of the Musiab section. The 'Onab section is divided into five clans, named: Diabab, Hasaballab, M'alliab, Waznab and Gharamab, whilst the Musiab is divided into four clans called: Marazik, 'Atamni, 'Amrab and Brahimab.[3]

616 It is locally accepted that each section represents half the population of the village, with the majority of the Musiab having their residence in the northern part, while the majority of the 'Onab reside mainly in the southern part. Between the two sections there is complete freedom of intermarriage

[1] The writer is under the impression, from his general observation, that the extended family seems to be stronger and more effective as an economic unit amongst big landowning families as distinct from what obtains in Silwa, a community of small landowners.

[2] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[3] Ab, the termination of the names of these clans, according to C. G. Seligman and Brenda Seligman, cannot be the Arabic ab—father. The suffix is common among the Beja tribal names. 'The Kababish, a Sudan Arab Tribe', *Harvard African Studies*, Vol. II, 1918, footnote, p. 113.

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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 631 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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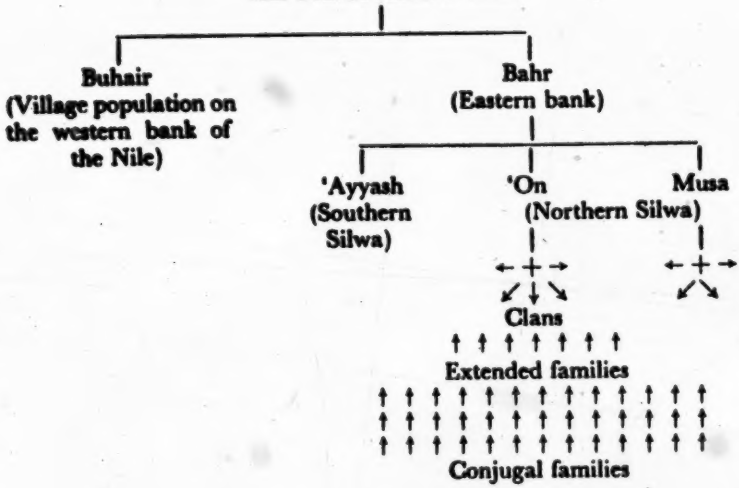
THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself
621 with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the
619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

THE G'AFRA DESCENT TREE



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the
186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having
613 a name for hospitality, or for scholarship and piety. Pride of clan is linked
616 with activities in the guest house, or co-operation in digging a well. Pride in one's section is revealed on communal celebrations especially during the
186 celebration of the Prophet's birthday; each section proclaiming that it has carried it out in a more spectacular manner as each usually has its 'mar-
619 quee' for listening to the recital of Koran and mawals (popular songs). At the level of the G'afra as such, the sense of pride reveals itself in their holy
186

[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardised details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 85.

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member.[1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
607 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
[779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

561 The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal
[576] uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

560 Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relation-
[835] ship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands
[264] after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various
[156] chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes cer-
[862] tain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain.
[231] She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

[611] The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, immature children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or maternal grandmother.

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The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

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One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

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be sitting while his father is standing. Of course, he cannot smoke in his father's presence, or do anything that might imply that he is not giving full attention to his father. 593

Amongst the children, the eldest son is favoured by his parents as he is the first to relieve his father of some of his tasks. The importance of age and sex in parents' treatment of their children shows itself, for instance, in the distribution of meat. Boys, on the whole, receive more than girls, and the older gets more than the younger. To vary this order is regarded as one of the means of reward or punishment for the children. An elder son is not expected to argue 'face to face' with his father if the latter refuses any of the former's demands. In this case he has to send a messenger to negotiate with his father. Complete identification with the father is reflected in the saying, 'Your father's enemy is your enemy and your father's friend is your friend', which is also a further evidence of the importance of family and clan solidarity. The observance of the proper rules of conduct with parents as well as with other relatives is the tangible attribute of children described as 'muaddabeen' meaning disciplined (often wrongly translated literally as 'polite'). In his role, the father has to combine discipline backed by moral sanctions.[1] [861] [577]

The relations of children to the mother are certainly warmer, intimate and more affectionate. The mother's tenderness and affection for her children should be repaid in obedience, service and respect. Ali told me that a mother's prayers for her children are the most effective appeal to God. Respect and regard for her is enjoined upon her sons and daughters by the Koran and the Prophetic tradition that says 'Paradise is at the feet of mothers'.

The relationship between brothers is expected to be one of complete solidarity. The common saying goes: 'Support your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed.' If a mother sees her sons squabbling over anything, she admonishes, asking them to deal with each other 'like brothers'. The admonition is also exercised when a boy stranger comes to visit the family, and the boys are asked to go out and play 'like brothers'. However, the first-born has a prominent position among his brothers and sisters. He acts as his father's representative. He gives orders to the younger brothers and sisters, and at least threatens them with punishment, sometimes telling his father. Other members of the family acknowledge and even support the prerogative of the first-born son. But, on the whole, brothers are expected to form a united front and act as 'two heads under one cap'. Older married brothers are usually held to be responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters after the death of the father.

Yet, in spite of the fact that brothers are expected to stand by each other through thick and thin, they are not encouraged to walk, sit or play together, especially after the age of eleven or twelve. If two or three brothers

[1] M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society' (summary of a lecture given in *Man*, Vol. LI, May 1951).

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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers.

The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are [586] socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often [136] than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, 593 whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction [598] between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315-16.

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with ease in the same gathering with their maternal uncles, but not with 604
their paternal uncles. The relations between paternal and maternal cousins 605
fall in the same line with that of the father's or mother's side.

One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social 607
structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige 611
are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded [595]
as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family 600

[1] E. L. Peters in his review of Hilma Granqvist, 'Child Problems among the Arabs' in *Man*, Vol. LI, September 1951, p. 126.

[2] Raymond Firth in his review of M. Fortes, 'The [illegible]b of Kinship' in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, April, 1951, p. 159.

[3] For kinship terms in Silwa, see Appendix IV, '[illegible]ote on Kinship Terms'.

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867 Such relations and norms governing the relations between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behaviour which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

602 Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and 602 pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and 539 people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no [518] people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

> A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
> The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was re-
> [533] sponsible for paying the expenses of treatment.
> The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am
> without support.

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'.

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others.

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women.

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between

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613 627 two joint families to 'level all the misunderstandings' between them. The dispute had arisen between the two joint families of 'Amareen and Karamsha, both belonging to the 'Amrab clan, Musiab section. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, the head of the first family, asked the Karamsha to lend him one of their camels to carry some maize straw from the field, but his request was refused because they alleged that they had no camels to spare as they were engaged in building a house. On another occasion, Hag Ahmad 'Imran insisted on taking the camel from one of the Karamsha while he was bringing water to be used in the building; people interfered and the matter was settled for the time being. After three days, he made another attempt and slapped the camel-driver, 'Othman, on the face, cursing his people. 'Othman, the offended man, could not retaliate as Hag Ahmad was the senior man of his family and older than he, and it is 'impolite' according to Arab traditions to slap such a man. People immediately gathered to settle this affair temporarily and prevent any further complications. Then Hag Ahmad's son came on the spot and started to insult 'Othman (who was his brother-in-law) and 'Othman, finding his equal, stood up to the challenge, but people intervened. The dispute, in spite of its temporary ending, had left 'something in the souls of the two houses'.

The 'residue in the souls' came up to the surface when the pilgrims from the clan came back from Mecca and had to be invited by the heads of the clan. The 'Amareen invited the Karamsha to co-operate, but the latter declined. In the meantime, it happened that a member of the Karamsha offered his help for the occasion but was refused by the 'Amareen. This added fuel to the fire and the situation between the two families became tense.

Deputations and mediators went between the two families to fix an 'Arab council' for arbitration. A respected and pious man suggested the family of Badawab for the purpose, but the Karamsha objected on the grounds that the former house was closely related to the 'Amareen. Then the arbitration was raised to the clan level and the Hasaballab clan from 'Onab section (to which neither side belonged) was suggested and this was accepted by both sides. On the appointed evening, the adult members of the two houses came to the Hasaballab guest house, where they were received and tea was served.

The meeting started by the Hasaballab head clansman reciting [788] 'Wahhidouh ya Gamaa—Say that God is one, O gathering'. Everybody present answered, 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet'. Then the chosen head of the Hasaballab asked the Karamsha, 'What is your story?' 'Abd-el-Gid, the head of the Karamsha, stated, 'We are claiming duties from the 'Amareen'. Then the head of the Hasaballab proposed that after sitting together in their guest house, the two sides should reconcile 'on the white and the reading of Fatiha', meaning that they should root out the past misunderstandings, and should forget all

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about them without going into any argument. The Karamsha, however, who were the accusers, opposed the suggestion and insisted on their case being heard, and consequently their rights being acknowledged. The argument was stated by the head of the Karamsha speaking and being interrupted by members of the disputing house here and there, as well as by members of his house. Then Hag Ahmad 'Imran began to defend his case, and then free argument took place.

One of the most effective devices in the Arab councils is the so-called 'mulakah' (a getting together), where on any dilemma in the course of argument, one or two persons from the mediators take one person or more from the disputing sides for a 'mulakah' to persuade him in a corner, or another room away from the general meeting, through personal and more intimate hearing to follow what the mediators proposed. Their usual form of pressure is to appeal to the person to 'consider the Arabs, or the people, or his kinsfolk'. The idea behind this device is to avoid any personal embarrassment or retreat in public, as this brings shame ('ar). If the retreat is accepted on a more intimate level, then the person has retreated owing to the pressure brought upon him because of personal ties or to his considerations to the 'Arabs', yet such a formulation of retreat is only implicit.

However, the 'mulakah' which occurred three times during the meeting did not produce the required effects. The Hasaballab, the arbitrating clan, had then to go outside by themselves to agree on 'the rights of the Arabs which no one now should fear to declare'.

The formulation of the verdict is very interesting as an index of the functioning elements of the social structure. The Hasaballab declared two decisions; the first was that Hag Ahmad 'Imran committed a double wrong by slapping 'Othman the camel-driver, and by not preventing, even by slapping, his son from getting entangled with 'Othman. The second decision was that the clan of 'Amrab, to which the two disputing families belong, had committed a mistake by not mediating between the two families in due time.

As the disputants are morally compelled to accept the arbitration of whoever they agree upon to take this part, the 'Amareen had to shake hands with the Karamsha, followed by all present reading the Fatiha.

Yet this was not the end of everything in this Arab council. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, feeling that injustice had been done to him, immediately declared that he 'claimed rights from Hasaballab', meaning that he wanted to sue the arbitrating clan before another clan, a charge which they have to accept. The case now is between the 'Amareen and the Hasaballab, and they both agreed to appoint the 'Awadallab clan in the neighbouring village to take up the arbitration between them.[1] If the Hasaballab's verdict is considered unjust, they have to pay the 'Amareen

[1] If any clan or family is appealed to by both disputing parties for arbitration, it cannot refuse to act.

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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations
692 between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one
[154] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined, by saying 'God compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 165.

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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'. 600

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money. 602 621 459 [477]

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis. 602 621 476

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families. 602 621 425

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa). 621 622 666 624 616 666 [607]

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters, 625

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms. [804]

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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects
574 the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular
[609] manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call
[576] them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear
[576] brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope.

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also
578 between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 388–9.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye.

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation.

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action.

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success.

Another intererting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 [593] A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of [604] orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

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potential friction in the new situation; and to the extent they are in harmony he can be secure in his new status. Many marriages actually break down because of the friction between parents, sisters or brothers, and wife or mother-in-law. This seems to be a common feature of patriarchal societies where the main emphasis is not on marriage as such, but on its wider social implications, being an institution relating two families and whose foundation is not 'romantic love' but having children.[1]

Such instances, and many others, show the delicacy of the relations in the kinship pattern. It is worth noticing that such delicacy is more on the paternal than the maternal side where the scope or the manifestations of tension are not so wide or numerous. Although such friction amongst kin is a valid element in their behaviour towards each other, it cannot obviate certain corporate structural symbols of social behaviour. If, for instance, a man is attacked or publicly insulted, his brother or cousin must stand with him in spite of whatever conflicts are hitherto outstanding. If an uncle dies, his cousins must attend the burial ceremony and 'passionately' mourn him. Gifts and money must be exchanged on occasions such as circumcision and wedding irrespective of the nature of personal relationship. Absence from the village is not an excuse for not performing one's obligations. Villagers in towns or cities have to mourn publicly their deceased in cafés or other places where others from Silwa, residing there, come to condole with them. On their return to the village they must perform the mourning rituals for close kin by weeping on their way from the station to the house, or if the deceased is a distant relative, by visiting his people, in spite of the lapse of time. On the whole, severing personal relationship for any reason does not necessarily mean ignoring one's corporate relationships by forfeiting any of the rights or shirking any of the duties.

Cutting across these bilateral kinship ties is a flow of inter-personal relationships which are not caught up in corporate bonds. This is what Professor Fortes designates as ties of 'cognatic kinship'. Cognatic ties are in contradistinction to agnatic ties, which primarily stress the corporate duties and rights and the solidarity of the social groupings, at the expense of the individual's private interests. Cognatic ties both within and across the kinship system differ from the agnatic in one important respect. In Fortes' words: 'They are ties of amity and mutual interest between individuals. Private rights and duties and personal loyalties prevail as against corporate rights. They represent the recognition that the direct social bonds of individual with individual are as vital for the wellbeing of the society as the fixed framework of corporate groupings. This sense of interdependence of men as individuals in the hard struggle of ordinary living, not only transcends the more rigid solidarities of the family, lineage . . .

[1] See Talcott Parsons, 'The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

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but also counteracts the friction and disturbances that constantly spring up in the relations of individuals with one another.'[1]

The adoption of Fortes' distinction and its implication is not arbitrary in this context, as it coincides almost completely with the two categories of relationship in the village. The agnatic kinship ties correspond to the 'Karaib' category while cognate kinship ties correspond to the 'Habaib' category. As one co-operates, for example, with relatives, one also selects a distantly related person or group, calling them 'Habaib', to co-operate with, and in this case a kinship term might be given to him or them as 'cousins'. The two categories are clearly distinguished in the sphere of mutual obligations, for in the case of cognatic ties, misunderstanding and friction would stop that form of social duties between the two sides.

[1] M. Fortes, *The Web of Kinship*, pp. 343–4.

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Chapter Three

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

A STUDY of the village community cannot ignore an analysis of the process of social change and its by-products. Unlike a primitive tribe, the village community is an integral part of a larger whole—the nation. One of the contributions of modern sociology is the distinction between community and state or society as constituting 'distinct categories of integrative forces'. The integrative forces of the community are based on more spontaneous, natural, and direct relations binding people who are of the same kin; whereas society is more artificial, more indirect, and more deliberate in its relations, maintaining its unity and cohesion with more conscious effort. The social heritage of the community is mainly local, tied up with its habitat; thus, usually, community and locality are almost synonymous.[1]

Such distinction has also been made between genuine and spurious culture, or between folk culture and modern civilization. In the analysis of Silwa community and social change, the concept of folk society is to be adopted as a useful one. Robert Redfield has successfully introduced this term to suggest the inclusion of 'peasant and rustic peoples who are not wholly independent of cities'.[2] Hence, it is necessary to project folk life in Silwa, and the processes of social change, against the larger framework of culture change in the Egyptian society.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state has envisaged the modernization of Egypt mainly in terms of Western civilization, the impact of which has been steadily increasing since the French expedition of 1798. It was through the efforts of the French scholars and Napoleon's reforms that Egypt started to interest itself in Western civilization. The Western way of life was greatly admired by Mohammad Ali, who ascended to power in 1805, and whose ambitious plans to build up a modern state led him to imitate Europe as widely as possible.

[1] This distinction is based on S. F. Nadel's article on 'Nupe State and Community', in *Africa*, Vol. VIII, 1935.

[2] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, footnote, p. 293.

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Ever since then, certain aspects of European civilization have been influencing the Egyptian folk life to varying degrees. However, the Westernization of Egypt, with its differential rate mainly between urban and rural districts, could be summarized in the increasing industrialization, in the spread of schools, in the establishment of a parliamentary system with its concomitant political parties, in the awakening of national feeling, in the expansion of medical facilities and the decline of folk medicine, in the growth of an intellectual middle class and a working class, and in the expanding of the press and other means of communication. Upon the degree of the penetration of such social forces depend the transformations that the folk structure have undergone.[1]

The phrase 'modernization' and not 'Westernization' of Egypt is in fact a happier term, which is more acceptable to the Egyptians. The educated Egyptians take a special pride in the approximation of their country's institutions and reforms to those of the West, together with an emphasis on their national colouring. Some of them have a romantic way of exalting the glories of the past mixed with various aspirations towards religious revival.

The impact of Western civilization on Egypt could be described in the two responses designated by Toynbee as 'Zealotism' and 'Herodianism'. The former response describes a state of mind and a pattern of behaviour which adheres to the traditional way of life with great scrupulousness and rigidity in the face of the pressures of the Western challenge. The Zealot's behaviour is essentially irrational and instinctive; he says in his heart that he will go thus far and no further. Herodianism is the other response based on the principle that the most effective way to guard against the danger of the new challenge is to master its secrets and to learn to fight the enemy with his own weapons and tactics.[2]

The 'ulema of al-Azhar, particularly during the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century, have been amongst the strongest opponents of Western life and the general trends of secularization. The attitude of the 'ulema in the nineteenth century towards the Western civilization is revealed in a conversation between Michaud, a French traveller who came to Egypt during the reign of Mohammad Ali, and the Mufti of al-Mansourah. The latter maintained that although Europeans accuse Easterners of rigidity and lack of purpose, they themselves do not know where and when to stop. Therefore, they always exceed their limits, and to the Mufti, going beyond the limit is worse than not being able to reach it. The result of European civilization, he believed, was chaos and dissatisfaction. He likened it to a fermenting drink which breaks the vessel that holds it.[3]

[1] For a study of the impact of Western civilization on Egyptian life a generation ago, see Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East*, London, 1932; and *Western Civilization in the Near East*, London, 1936.

[2] Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, pp. 192–4.

[3] S. Ghorbal, *Mohammed Ali al-Kabir*, p. 76.

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The attitude of the 'ulema and the interpretation of Islam in a narrow-minded way have led some of the progressive 'ulema to a new way of thinking for the rejuvenation of the Moslem way of life. This need was voiced by al-Sayyid Jamal-al-Din Al-Afghani and Mohammad Abduh, whose ideas met with opposition from the 'ulema of their day. Al-Afghani, on his visit to Cairo in 1871, urged the need for adapting Islam to modern conditions and of instituting radical educational reforms in al-Azhar. He believed that Moslem countries should work for their freedom from foreign domination and reformulate their religion which, he thought, by reason of its inner spiritual force could be reinterpreted to suit the demands of modern life.[1] Mohammad Abduh, like his teacher al-Afghani, was a vigorous critic of the narrow content and method of teaching in al-Azhar. He advocated the broadening of the basis of learning by studying not only the works of classical Arabic and theology for the defence of the Faith, but by studying also the modern sciences, history, and comparative religion to catch up with Western progress.[2]

However, secularization of life in Egypt and divorce from religious principles and justifications have rarely been more than skin deep. In the constitution of the country, Islam is the religion of the state. Moreover, Islamic forces have always provided the basic guidance in life for individual as well as for corporate life.

Indications of a religious revival are witnessed in movements like that of the Moslem Brotherhood and in the considerable flow of literature dealing with the life of the Prophet, the Companions, and the four Caliphs, written by eminent authors. Indeed, many of the Arab thinkers assert that without the inspiration and guidance of Islam, the future holds barren prospects for the Moslem world whose spiritual and intellectual greatness depends essentially upon its faith. They also claim that a purification of Islam is also necessary to rid it of the superstitions which have led to the backwardness of the masses. This purification, combined with subsequent intensification of Islamic principles, can alone enable religion to become as creative a force as it once used to be.[3]

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One of the main forces that is inextricably connected with the process of social change since the beginning of the twentieth century is the emergence of the middle class in Egypt. Hitherto, Egypt's economic and political structure was dominated by a class of warriors similar to the medieval knights in Europe. The dynasties of the Ayyubides (A.D. 1171–1250) and the Mamelukes (A.D. 1250–1517) relied almost entirely on a class of warriors in both their internal and external policies. This class received its crushing blow from Mohammad Ali in 1811, and this paved the way for the great landowners to wield social and political power. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the middle class of government

[1] Charles Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, p. 15.
[2] H. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 39.
[3] A. J. Arberry and Rom Landau (ed.), *Islam Today*, pp. 14–16.

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177 officials, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and those engaged in commerce, has begun to exert an increasing influence on Egyptian life. This class sees itself not only standing against external political pressure, but also against big landowners, thus championing the feelings and aspirations of the whole nation.

Another important factor in Egyptian society is the relatively recent feeling of nationhood and state sovereignty. Since the Arab conquest of Egypt in A.D. 642, the country has been a part of the Moslem world. In Islam, political and religious matters are indivisible, and their conduct is vested in the ruler who is the instrument of both canon and civil law. But to say that Islam does not distinguish social life and civic status from religious principles of the Faith does not mean that it has established a new pattern of life in the Near East. The religious foundations of society were existent in the ancient Egyptian times, when the Pharaoh was the supreme ruler as well as the representative of the gods on earth.

The Ottoman Empire, however, witnessed in its latter days the gradual moving away from Islamic theocracy. With this, the religious colouring of the Caliphate gradually paled until that institution was eventually abolished in modern Turkey in 1924. The breakdown of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War left the way open for the rise of Arab nationalism in the modern sense of the word.

It has been the deliberate policy of the Egyptian rulers, since the days of Mohammad Ali, to modernize Egypt. More often than not, the pursuit of such a policy has led to aping of Western institutions, regardless of the different social, economic and political background. It is one of the recent contributions of sociology that 'the end products of culture fusion resemble a chemical rather than a mechanical mixture. The resulting culture will not be a simple aggregation of elements, all of which can be traced to one or the other of the parent cultures, but a new thing many of whose patterns cannot be directly referred to either.' In the light of such a remark one is not surprised to find that many Western institutions have not yielded the results intended and expected from them in Egyptian society. An interesting line of research would be to compare the products of the Egyptian parliamentary system, Europeanized system of schools, co-education, industrialization, and so forth, with similar institutions and processes in the West. A critical evaluation and adaptation of borrowings must be always faced; and importations of institutions can only be justified in so far as they could be digested and assimilated by local conditions.

It is appropriate here to mention that, in spite of the political and social vicissitudes that have overtaken Egyptian society, the folk-life has mainly held its own within, and even sometimes against, the trends in the larger society. Various political struggles have occurred throughout the history of Egypt, but the common people, tied down to their land, submitted to any social order enforced upon them. They rarely took part in any resistance and left the battles to the military and ruling classes. To them a

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military defeat meant the ousting of one ruling power by another.[1] Although it is these rulers who have engaged the main interest of historians, it is the habits and traditions of the common folk that have, in fact, been the ultimate forces determining the general run of Egyptian life. What Gruening wrote of Mexico, quoted by Redfield, is equally applicable to the situation in Egypt. 'In few countries is political history less significant than in Mexico, yet its historiographies are pre-eminently political.' Redfield continues: 'The formal institutions, the explicit statement of programme or policy, the bulk of contemporary documents, lie remote from the ways of the masses and record their history almost not at all. The world of the cultivated classes who alone are articulate and alone communicate freely with us, is a world apart from that of the folk.'[2]

Only to a very small extent has Silwa been affected by the forces mentioned earlier. It still preserves its folk culture as the basis of its community life. The village is a homogeneous community in the threefold implication of the term. It is homogeneous to the extent that the villagers belong, or at least consider themselves to belong, to one blood group, engaging in the same kind of work, and, moreover, characterized by slow rate of social change.[3]

The question of social change exists, however, in terms of 'setting and background', and not by itself. 'This is why a discussion of change in culture has meaning only as part of the problem of cultural stability. Both terms are relative and dependent on one another.'[4]

In the process of social change examined in Yucatan, Redfield maintains that the life of primitive peoples can be contrasted with the way of life characterizing civilization in modern urban centres. He maintains that the change is one from a relatively immobile, homogeneous society in which relationships are personal, controls familial, sanctions sacred, with a well-integrated culture, to one tending to have opposite characteristics. In short, organization, individualization, and secularization are causally interrelated with isolation, integration, and homogeneity. In Yucatan, the

[1] Gibb and Bowen say that during the Ottoman rule of the Arab Provinces, and even before that, governors and governed had little effect on each other. 'The explanation is to be found in the very lack of a complex, all-embracing political organization. . . . We may visualize Moslem society as composed of two co-existing groups, the relations between which were for the most part formal and superficial. One group formed the governing class of soldiers and officials, the other the governed class of merchants, artisans and cultivators. Each was organized internally on independent lines and neither group interfered with the organization of the other in normal circumstances.' *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 209.

[2] Quoted by R. Redfield, *Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village*, p. 1: 'In Egypt at present, the new social order is deliberately attempting to bridge the gap between these two social strata. Many of the new legislations aim at minimizing disparities between citizens and at providing equal opportunities for all.'

[3] See Margaret Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory', in *Social Structure*, p. 21.

[4] Melville J. Herskovits, 'The Processes of Cultural Change', in *Science of Man*, p. 144.

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community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

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classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

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Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

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It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Malihi school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God.

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life.

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted.

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered.

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for

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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village
622 in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of
his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station,
with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with
[625] the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main
642 complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[594] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[430] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[361] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

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Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, 178
and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be 574
spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also [431]
reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which [556]
Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of
clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of 178
some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran- 554
carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town 178
show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although 369
the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has
resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social 178
structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of [626]
learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their 369
life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as
having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such [828]
expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures 182
of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

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Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages: 843 [842] [115]

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage. [753]

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period. [826]

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth. [262]

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain- [626]

[p. 86 is blank]

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843 ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as [626] 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle [788] over her body on her return.

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The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home. 842

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'. 842 154 [753]

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (*i.e. water-carrying*), 844 [843]

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects. 789 [843] [755]

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

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844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

> 'Who supports his father
> except him who descends from his loins,
> May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
> and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

> 'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
> and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were [183] not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly [062] prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. [776] Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the 553 end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important [180] feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven [055] times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story [782] of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest, 782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1-50.

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [176] [177]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [183]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 841 [183] [581]

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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[789] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

858 My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
779 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

842 My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

858 It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
593 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
562 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. Moreover, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554 and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562 sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the difference of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one, or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear 'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of 'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her marriage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma. Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562 arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593 is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and
431 advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
602 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immediately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

602 Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [788] [848] [847]

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553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

846 It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat. During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing
[853] it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for
850 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

846 The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'companionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'companion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of companion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with companion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [520]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

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853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

862 The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between 842 lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant

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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [840] [571]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the infant to social discipline as early as possible.[2] 862 [808]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father, as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

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853 hibition of incestuous marriage between boys and girls who have been
582 nursed from the same breast (foster brothers and sisters). A few incidents occur of women nursing other women's children, even when the mothers are alive, but only for special reasons, e.g. when the mother's milk is not sufficient, or when a mother has a thin underweight baby, giving hers to a fat mother with fat babies. The incidents are known, and the marriage taboo is observed. Yet such wet-nursing rarely occurs among close relatives, where future intermarriage of children is anticipated.

853 Significant, too, is the belief that character traits can be transmitted
828 through the mother's milk. This is mainly emphasized by the mother's folk. Through the mother's milk the child becomes like his maternal uncles. 'If the child becomes like his maternal uncle, then he is worth praising, if he becomes like his father it is better to throw him in the sea.' The paternal side, while admitting the influence of the mother, teasingly imputes the unusual traits to her, while the strong traits are traced to the father's people. 'If the boy is not a good boy, two-thirds of his character is attributed to his maternal uncles; if he is a capable boy, then he has done no injustice to his father.'

However justifiable the claims may seem, the mother's milk is recognised as a very important factor in determining the child's character. The advice given to a man in search of a wife is to 'search for the maternal uncles of his children', as the boys would be like them through the influence of the mother's breast. With regard to this, Ali told me that the ancestor of the village (as well as other villages), G'afar, is of a higher rank of honour compared with Abdullah ibn al Zubair, the grandfather of another group of villages in the same province of Aswan. The reason is that though the two grandfathers are relatives of the Prophet of the same degree, yet the latter is not on the same level of honour because his mother and maternal uncles were slaves, while the former is of doubly honourable parentage. It is also said that 'as the roots spread and feed surreptitiously one has to choose the maternal uncles for his children'.

In this light, it is appropriate to discuss Granqvist's statement that the Arab families having Negro servants are afraid to let their children be wet-nursed by one of them, because they might acquire that 'unreasonable crossness' which they claim to characterize the Negroes. In Silwa the fear extends not only to Negroes, but to any strangers 'whose origin is not known', and who might interfere with the purity of the child's character by making it unstable, as homogeneous origin leads to a consistent and reliable character. To say that a certain person 'has origin' is to commend him, while saying he is a 'mixture' is to condemn his character. Evidence is seen in the fear of the villagers to have any mixture in either wet-nursing, or marriage, with the family of carpenters, potters and water-carriers.
582 Though the people of these families are lighter in skin than the villagers, and many of them comparatively well-to-do, they are considered as aliens and their origin is unknown. The case of the daughter of a village man

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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of 582
gossip and warning against such mixture.

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child 853
does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth.

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. 856
The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting.

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of 862
premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food.

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed [821]
to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, [842]
and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circum- [304]
cision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to [821]
infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive.

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth 854
and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its

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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, he girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age 892 of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

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days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 853
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their siblings outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have [188] more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of [195] the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1] 513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood 121
affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual 858
variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child 858
of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being pre- 858
cocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure 865
of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain 593
symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 170-1.

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universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his developement accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865
is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858
pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865
mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593
is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152
sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [151]
two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865
tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593
old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152
that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg ?55
fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154]
a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154]
children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adultr in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incen- [626] tives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
" 5–9 "	3·90	3·84	3·92	3·94	3·34
" 10–19 "	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·63
" 20–29 "	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
" 30–39 "	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
" 40–49 "	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
" 50–59 "	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
" 60–69 "	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
" 70–79 "	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
" 80–89 "	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
" 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·323	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1941–2.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 30, from which these percentages are worked out.

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There is another aspect of the high mortality rate of children, which is not confined to the Silwa community, but applies to the rest of the country. Infant mortality has an obvious effect on the stability of marriage relationship, as a woman that bears children who do not survive is in danger of being divorced by her husband, for she is considered the same as one who cannot bear children at all. The larger the number of children surviving, the less likelihood there is of divorce.[1] Hence, the dire need to prevent such a disaster by women who resort to many devices for pregnancy or warding off the evil eye, some of which were described earlier. Official statistics clearly show the relation between divorce and the number of children born or surviving; the latter case is shown in the following table.

TABLE III

The relation between divorce and the number of surviving children in percentages[2]

No. of Children	*Divorces*				
	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
None	74·7	76·0	77·0	76·8	77·8
One child	16·3	15·78	15·3	15·3	15·0
Two children	5·08	4·78	4·52	4·54	4·2
Three "	2·18	2·10	1·95	1·90	1·77
Four "	0·985	0·907	0·754	0·712	0·778
Five "	0·398	0·395	0·316	0·348	0·332
More than five children	0·318	0·222	0·245	0·186	0·205

This high mortality rate for this age group is partly due to the onset of various child diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, diphtheria, as well as endemic diseases such as dysentery. As mentioned earlier, the sickness of children at this stage is acknowledged by the villagers themselves and sometimes attributed to acute states of jealousy from siblings, or to the exposure of the delicate child to the evil eye.[3]

On the whole, the family treatment of the infant is relatively more protective and more attentive compared with the later period of childhood. Nursing children usually fare better than their older siblings in health and appearance. The protective attitude towards nurslings and toddlers could

[1] M. Hussein, 'Infant Mortality in Egypt', Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished), London, 1940, p. xxii.

[2] Worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 51.

[3] According to *Vital Statistics* in Egypt, diseases responsible for infant mortality according to their death roll are infectious diseases, respiratory system diseases, diarrhoea and congenital diseases.

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855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
854 achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the
[196] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that
195 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

857 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over,
[866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant
857 593 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers.

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy.

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'.

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike.

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it
264 was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, still have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while
[845] those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is
852 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three
304 and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the
[264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands. 850 364

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment. [300] [534] [431] [949]

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent. [292] [152] [845]

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice. [265]

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree 852

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy [860] and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

852 The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is 304 to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the [144] Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

852 Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they 431 are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an [178] increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

431 In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343-4.

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852 occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute
867 between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange
[593] of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose
[826] foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such
[776] children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

852 Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is
779 the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

852 The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circum-
cision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them
[779] as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For
[783] the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Haj Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

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851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
857 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
865 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[154] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between
[764] the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's
[152] death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

852 During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
154 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[754] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. xxx.

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fact that the mother, in taking the child to the Nile, throws his foreskin, enclosed in a loaf of bread, into the water, and washes the 'mirwad' (antimony stick) used in the operation in the waters of the Nile. This relationship is also evidenced by the fact that circumcision, like weaning, should take place at least two or three days before the appearance of the new moon, otherwise the child is liable to be 'tied up' (mushabir), the consequence of which may be that the wound might not heal quickly, or that the child might eventually be sterile.

Children show great interest in the circumcision ceremony, as it is a great occasion in which they associate with the circumcised child, eat with him, enjoy themselves, inviting people for the ceremony, or going on the children's round with their palm-tree branches, or getting sweets and peanuts during the procession. They usually tell you of the good food they had or the new clothes they wore on the occasion of their younger sibling's or cousin's circumcision. On asking some of the schoolchildren about events during which they felt happy, they invariably gave the answer of a sibling's circumcision or marriage. The educative significance of the ceremony for the older children, who witness and attend this public celebration, though indirect, is quite obvious. The social norms based on mutual obligations, the meaning of kinship and family solidarity, are concomitant in the ritual ceremony.

One cannot discuss circumcision without reference to the psycho-analytical explanation of the ritual. Freud sees in it the castration complex, which is derived from the Oedipus situation. He states that in some primitive societies circumcision is common and is performed at the age of initiation into manhood, and it was only as a secondary development that it was transferred to the early years of life. He continues: 'It is of great interest to find that among primitive peoples, circumcision is combined with cutting the hair, and knocking out of teeth, or is replaced by them, and that our children, who cannot possibly have any knowledge of this, in fact, treat these two operations, in the anxiety with which they react to them, as equivalents of castration.'[1] In Silwa such an anxiety concerning castration is evident in the adults' threatening their children to re-circumcise them even if they are already circumcised, and it manifested itself in one of the children's dreams described later.[2]

Some psycho-analysts maintain that circumcision, as an initiating ceremony of the child by his elders, helps to conduct the growing children across those difficult thresholds of life transformations that demand change in the patterns, not only of conscious, but also of unconscious life.[3] Géza Roheim maintains that circumcision represents a process of the child's growth from the passive Oedipus situation to the active orientation towards the loved object. 'The period of life which conditions the transition from

[1] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, footnote, p. 133. [2] See Appendix XI.
[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series, New York, 1949, p. 10.

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852 mother to wife is dramatized. It is subject to operations: it is represented in symbols.'[1] The circumcision ritual, as practised in Silwa, lends itself to a considerable degree to Roheim's explanation, especially when one remembers such rituals as the disposing of the foreskin by putting it in a hole in a loaf of bread, the cleansing of the antimony stick in the Nile, the going round of the boys, holding the long palm-tree sticks in their hands, the admonition to the circumcised boy not to show his penis to anyone but his mother before it heals, as well as the other beliefs connected with fertility.

Sociologists, however, cannot be satisfied with such explanations. Viewed as an element in the totality of the cultural situation the 'castration' problem cannot be fully understood in the orthodox Freudian connotation with its biological bias. A sociological interpretation has to include the questions: Why does a child who is considered to be circumcised by 'angels' have to undergo the ceremony? Why is such an operation 852 dramatized on such an elaborate social occasion? Indeed such a ceremony 867 telescopes the individual's development as a process in which he is caught up in a net of reciprocal social obligations infused with moral and religious sanctions. Considering 'castration' in the context of social organization in Silwa, and as the villagers view it, it must be regarded as a social occasion with a religious sanction for declaring publicly the alignment of the child to his sex group. Thus, the child would identify itself with the social role of father or mother by becoming aware of the social implications and consequences of behaviour relevant to its sex group. The community submits its children to an operation around which everything is done to heighten the moral and social temperature of its culture and to induce a state of nervous super-excitation through which the youngsters may receive the adult's indelible stamp.[2]

[1] Géza Roheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, p. 18.

[2] See Edwin W. Smith, 'Indigenous Education in Africa', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*; and B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London, 1927.

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Chapter Six

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

In this chapter it is intended to outline the procedures and methods that are adopted in this community to inculcate the norms that transform the child, who is relatively peripheral, into the adult who is the central link in village social life. The transition can be considered, as Fortes puts it, as one 'from an economically passive burden into a producer, from a biological unit into a social personality, irretrievably cast in the habits, disposition, and notions characteristic of his culture'.[1] Fortes has also provided the writer with certain insight in evaluating the learning process as a by-product of the cultural routine, a phenomenon which obtains in the village community. It is obvious that in Silwa the education of children is not surrounded, as in some primitive societies, with ceremonies of initiation, elaborate ritual, or narration of totemic myths. Learning accrues mainly through children's observing, imitating and assisting their adults in their everyday activities. For the villagers express the educational process through emphasizing life and time as the most important educational agencies which mould and influence the character, and provide the experience. The difference between an adult and a child is, on the whole, quantitative rather than qualitative. The former knows and thus conforms to the cultural norms, while the latter does not. The commonly used word is not the classical word 'tifl' (infant) but another word which is also classical but literally means 'ignorant' (jahil)—and thus identifies ignorance with childhood. It is because of this ignorance of expected skills, norms and attitudes that the children are considered inferior to the adult, and the younger as subservient to the elder.

Here socialization is to include its two aspects of technical training and cultural or regulatory training.[2] In Chapter I it was shown how a boy or a girl is progressively introduced to the economic pursuits of adults, and what skills were expected of them at successive stages of their growth. It was also emphasized how the child was expected to take over from his

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 6.
[2] See Introduction.

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father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

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he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognizes that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people.

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomized in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God.

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3]

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the supposed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347.

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located.

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

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861 Beside adults, from the 5 to 10 years, children also learn through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to [551] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten [552] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

857 Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before [866] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

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867 a son meeting his father after a long absence, as well as the greeting of adults for religious men and those who are believed to be endowed with 'baraka'—holiness.

Whilst in the first five or six years the child's respect for its parents and elders is inculcated mainly through physical gestures and intimacy, the respect later on is expected in terms of a decrease in word intimacy and physical proximity. Moreover, certain manners must be observed, such as walking behind the father or an elder and not abreast of him, standing up or at least sitting properly on the ground on his approach, dismounting from donkey-back on seeing the father in a formal gathering, and so on. Whether in attending to the hand-washing of guests, the distribution of tea amongst them, or in shaking hands with them, a fairly definite order of precedence is observed by the child and even by adults themselves. On the whole, with the progress of the child in age, details of etiquette are gradually enforced upon him. It is also interesting to note in this respect that a father when taking his son of four or five years to the field, would make him ride behind him and not in front, and one cannot argue that this is merely a matter of convenience as fathers who take their sons in front of them are considered to be spoiling them.

It is important here to distinguish between two categories of behaviour with regard to respect relationships, and this distinction is mainly related to whether there are any outsiders or public onlookers. The child, for instance, is allowed a certain amount of latitude in conforming to the external tokens of respect to its parents in the intimate circle of the family, for example, to sit on the bed while the father is sitting on the ground, to make himself a nuisance with the mother, or to hit back when she scolds him. Yet this is severely disapproved of and punished if there is a visitor in the house, or if done outside the house. This is the root of the absolute bonds of kinship behaviour on formal occasions. No plea could absolve the person from not fulfilling his obligations towards his relatives on public occasions such as mourning or exchange of gifts on ceremonial occasions. The failure to fulfil such obligations, as the villagers put it, 'makes a special history for the person'. The distinction between formal and informal behaviour gradually recedes as the child grows older and he is supposed to approach progressively for all occasions the formal expectations of behaviour.[1]

593 The general pattern of behaviour between the child and its elders is thus largely one of dominance, submission couched in the term 'filial piety'. The filial sentiment, however, is not taught to or expressed by the child in any sentimental phrases. It was a great joke amongst the children [369] in one neighbourhood to repeat statements of an urban child whom they heard saying 'I love my father, I love my mother'. Such open expressions

[1] R. Firth distinguishes between formal and informal behaviour. In the latter there are more individual differences and variations; while the former is enjoined upon each member of the society and the observance and fulfilment of formal behaviour is regarded as the sure test for the harmonious functioning of society. *We, the Tikopia*, p. 175.

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of filial sentiment are considered by the children as one of the ways in which Cairo people spoil their sons and daughters. Children's respect for and devotion to parents must be absolute and unconditional and do not have to be verbalized. Yet, on the other hand, the appeal to please the mother or father is usually invoked to persuade the child to behave properly or to perform certain duties. 'Fetch fuel for mother so that she can say that her daughter is good.' 'Wear this garment so that uncle's people will say they have a good boy.' While the affection of blood relatives is used to stimulate and motivate the child, he is not expected to express his sentiment towards them directly.

During early childhood, kinship terms are learnt, and by the age of five, the children I spoke to were quite capable of telling the categories of paternal uncle and aunt, maternal uncle and aunt, cousins and nephews and nieces. As anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out, the child does not start off in life with a full set of kinship terms, but gradually, and not without difficulty, fits itself into the framework provided for it by its elders.[1] During its development, contacts and associations, a child begins to know what type of behaviour and sentiment is expected from him towards different relatives. In terms of behaviour the above-mentioned children distinguished between those closely-related children with whom they could play freely, more co-operatively, and possibly with more superficial wrangling, and those with whom they could not play in the same way; between those from whom they could demand a piece of bread or a bit of onion, and those from whom they could not; between those who could, without suspecting malicious intentions, accept their curses and those who would resent such curses. They also knew that their close relatives are those by whom they can be protected or punished, and whom they fear and love, and to whose houses they can stray, accepting food without fear of being punished by the parents. One of the children told me that his mother punished him for going with another boy to the latter's house. She rebuked him by saying that those who offered him food would call him a son of beggars, and that it would have been quite different had he gone to his grandfather's people. Children who stray quite often into houses which are not those of close relatives, are sometimes dubbed by their elders as paupers ('fakeers', who roam about and knock at the gate of Allah). Such an excuse is given by the elders to avoid the sense of shame that their children might bring to them. In this way a child is made to learn the difference between the easy flow of mutual obligations between close relatives and the strain of accepting hospitality from distant people which is considered almost as a debt. On such occasions, one also sees the importance of parental obligations towards their children, whose hunger would reflect on their parental duties and prestige.[2]

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 270.
[2] For such connection between hunger and prestige, see Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, pp. 43–4.

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867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [585] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [504] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

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as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

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them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

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Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills.

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure.

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

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159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

716 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [715] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [822] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking [828] too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

511 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 713 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defense mechanism of [illegible] and caution.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

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responsible for the adult defence mechanism of rigidity and caution. However, one of the well-known characteristics of the Egyptian fellah is his stubbornness, obstinacy and tenacity, which sometimes take the form of an obsession.

Connected with producing fear in the children is the violent and bad-tempered manner in which adults administer punishment to them. Punishment, however, may be in the form of fulminations or curses, or it may be corporal. As mentioned earlier, a father may curse his son by saying 'Curse on your father; a curse on your people; a curse on your origin (seed)', and so on. It seems that such curses have their effect on the children. A child of about nine years old told me that the curse of his parents, especially that of his mother, when she uncovers her head, is a thing which he tries to avoid; one cannot enter Paradise if one invokes one's parents' anger, and their blessings increase one's span of life. Punishment can also take the form of denouncing the boy as a girl, or condemning him as a homosexual, and also through depriving him of his food or his share of meat. On certain occasions, if the child shows reluctance to comply with, or to conform to, its elders' commands, they impugn one of its senses by expressing their disapproval or reproach in phrases such as, 'Aren't you listening?' 'Haven't you got eyes to see?' 'Are you blind?' 'Don't you smell?' 'Don't you feel?' 'Haven't you got blood?' Such phrases imply that the child should have done the accepted thing without being prompted, because he has only to make use of one of his senses. It is occasionally pointed out to the child that his jaw which uttered the words, or his hand that committed the offence, or his ears that heard the unpermissible, should be punished.

Corporal punishment is not uncommon either by beating, striking, whipping or slapping. Such punishment is inflicted upon the child normally after he has committed a serious misdemeanour, such as talking back at his parents while being rebuked, throwing stones at his mother, causing trouble with the neighbours' children, or on complaints being made against him by an older person. The child's ambivalent attitude towards its parents or uncles expresses itself in its appeal for their mercy when it is thrashed by one of them. He makes a screaming appeal, by crying out: 'O father, O father, by the name of the Prophet, O father', even if the father himself happens to be the one who is thrashing him.

The mother invariably gets the worst of the child's temper, aggression and disobedience, and consequently she is apt to administer punishment more frequently than the father. She is the parent with whom the child comes into active contact in terms of give and take. The child feels her punishing powers as he breaks things, loiters on being sent on an errand, loses money which he was given to buy things from the shop, or when he makes himself a nuisance when visitors are in the house, and similar other misdemeanours. Having more contacts with children's problems of upbringing, the mother tends to be the target of their ambivalence; they

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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

577 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [857] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension. Fear, moreover, is an efficient lever for the maintenance of social cohesion in the pattern of father-son relationship, and hence it is not surprising to find the common saying that 'fear is a blissful thing' (al khof baraka). 577 [156]

The popular sayings connected with the administering of punishment are also varied and inconsistent, perhaps to maintain a balance and to avoid excess. On the one hand one hears phrases such as 'If you don't beat the child, nothing good would come out of him', 'The stick is for the disobedient', 'Those who do not feel, the stick would make them feel'. On the other hand, there are other sayings such as 'The stick makes the boy dumb'. 'The threat would have no effect on those who do not obey spontaneously', It is considered, however, that childhood is the most appropriate period for punishing and disciplining the child. It is said that the child during this time is like the maize plant in its second irrigation (this irrigation is considered to be important for the plant's growth and is preceded by the pulling out of the grass and other weeds). The concentration of punishment at this period is justified on the grounds that the boy or the girl at this stage is neither too young nor too old to learn. The only form of corporal punishment administered to adolescents on some rare occasions is slapping. 861

However, the administering of punishment by parents to children is checked from being unduly excessive by other relatives, neighbours or other adults who happen to be present. Mediation (literally separation—'hajazat') as institutionalized in the 'Arab council' is an important force in the legal and social functioning of the community.[1] It is practised by children themselves and even mock fights are sometimes played by them to enjoy the wranglings of conciliation similar to those amongst the adults. Some children told me that on seeing their parents quarrelling, they immediately go out of the house to invite one of their close relatives for mediation. Adults are also expected to stop children's fights if they happen to be passing by, and even punish the disputants.[2] [857] [578]

It is appropriate here to evaluate the period of childhood in Silwa, in comparison with their period of infancy. With the exception of observing sex and religious norms, childhood in Silwa is the period through which a boy or a girl experiences a great number of the pressures of socialization. Some modern anthropologists have pointed out the importance of discontinuities or inconsistencies in child-rearing practices as relevant cultural data especially in connection with personality organization.[3] Esther Goldfrank, for instance, postulates four categories of societies with regard to

[1] See Chapter II. [2] See Appendix X, 'Story Completion'.
[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning', in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. by Kluckhohn and Murray, p. 414.

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861 the continuity or discontinuity of disciplinary policy between infancy and childhood:

(1) Societies where infant and later disciplines are weak.
(2) Societies where infant and later disciplines are severe.
(3) Societies where infant disciplines are severe and later disciplines are weak.
(4) Societies where infant disciplines are weak, and later disciplines are severe.

Goldfrank continues to say: 'From the standpoint of logic these categories pose no problems. However, difficulties may arise when an attempt is made to assign specific societies to any one of them, for permissiveness and pressure are present at all stages of development.'[1] The writer feels that the child-rearing practices compared with infant practices could be classified, without much debate or appearance of subjectivity, into the fourth category of societies where infant disciplines are weak, permissive, and protective, while the later disciplines are prompt, strict, and on the whole, severe.

It has been shown in Chapter IV on infancy how the angelic children are treated permissively and with very few controls until they start to respond orally to the external world. Perhaps the only forbidden fruit in the mother's paradise for the child is the biting of her breast while he is suckling, which normally results in her withdrawal of the breast from him, and might be accompanied by some angry words or a push. On the other hand, we have noticed how the period of childhood is seized upon to discipline the child, and make him conform as well as know his position in the adult world.

155 In this connection, a question of a psychological nature could be asked. How does the child bridge the gap or adjust himself between the early permissive training and the stern childhood discipline without a complete disintegration of his personality? In answer to such a question, certain points must be remembered. The child receives the pressures of socialization, and forgoes his mother's blessings at a stage when he is capable of using his newly-developed interest, such as walking and talking, in his contacts with other children. The social arrangement of the extended family could be also considered as a factor in making up for the mother's deprivation. The rough and aggressive games are an outlet for the strain of socialization during childhood. The gap is also bridged through the integration of the child into the work of the adults. From the economic point of view, the child is continuously conditioned to participate in farm work as a responsible member. Through work in the fields, which is meaningful for the child and indispensable to his family, the child is incorporated in the family circle, and is recognized as a valuable member in it,

[1] Esther S. Goldfrank, 'Socialization, Personality and the Structure of the Pueblo Society', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, 1945, p. 517.

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and this contributes in no small way to the satisfaction of the individual's psychological need for social recognition.[1] These are some of the forces the writer regards as maintaining some sort of healthy effect in the growing up of children in Silwa; otherwise the strain of childhood would have been unbearable in a predominantly authoritarian community where the child is regarded as its father's possession. Erich Fromm would consider such a community as thwarting the child's legitimate strivings for freedom, independence, and self-fulfilment. He maintains that the social arrangement of an authoritarian patriarchal society, frustrating man's wishes to self-realization, tends to create in him a destructive passion, which in turn must be suppressed by external or internal force.[2]

If one thinks of the disciplinary policies of childhood in terms of a straight line, at one end of which is the easy-going discipline of some primitive societies, and at the other end the harsh discipline of a society like the Japanese, it is apparent that the type of discipline to be found in Silwa is closer to that of the Japanese society than to that of those primitive societies.

The period of childhood is considered by the adult as an unimportant stage which should be quickly passed over. The writer seldom noticed grown-ups talking about their childhood, and his informants found it very difficult, even unbecoming, to recall their childhood days. The villagers' attitude towards children is indeed a mixed one, regarding them both as supernumerary entities as well as a sub-adult. A child is an economic asset as well as a social nuisance. It was shown in Chapter I how the child is continuously expected to take over from the adult the tasks which it is capable of performing as a part of its acquisition of discipline—'adab'. On the level of social action, however, it is supposed to be insignificant and to have no opinion of its own. On the whole, a son or a daughter, whether young or old, cannot replace the parent in performing formal social obligations; for example, taking gifts to circumcision and wedding ceremonies or entertaining a guest, unless there are extenuating circumstances which justify it. The child's world is always connected with the female world rather than the grown-up male world. In the ceremonial celebrations, children are usually mixed with women more than with men. If children happened to be in a male gathering, they must keep to their place, and be able to withdraw at the earliest opportunity to play on their own, or to join the female crowd. At this level of social action, the unity of the social sphere between children and grown-ups tends to break. Although the child's life is directed towards aims, responsibilities, and values similar

[1] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, pp. 47–8. See also Abram Kardiner in *The Individual and His Society*, where he emphasizes the emotional meaning of work: 'There is, first, the intrinsic gratification in work as a form of mastery. This must be credited with being a basic gratification. The satisfactions derived from it are common to all forms of mastery. They give the individual a feeling of effectiveness and control' (p. 30).

[2] Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, pp. 133–8.

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858 to those of the adults, he is debarred from adult circles, and adult activities; and grown-ups do not expect their children to express any opinion on matters which are outside their domain. Although they are expected to orientate themselves to the same sphere of life, children are not given any significant role in the social life of the village, apart from their economic role. Until the age of twelve the children are not expected to go to the mosque to say their prayers, and if they go they are allowed to sit in the back row only, and never in the front or the middle. Women and girls, however, do not go to the mosque at all in Silwa, and are not expected to do so. There is no religious sanction for this, however; Islam has enjoined mosque prayers on both sexes. Compared with the Tale child, the social sphere of the Silwa child is more restricted in many respects. In the former society, the social sphere of adults and children is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. 'Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children, or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system.'[1] In Silwa, however, although children may know about the happenings and events of the adult world in the social sphere, they are not expected to take an active part, or to show interest in them, unless they are asked to do so. On some occasions the writer heard children who, on enquiring about the guests coming to the house, or the nature of the gifts taken to relatives, or where father was going, were silenced and asked to 'mind their own business'.

828 Moreover, the process of 'growing-up' is believed to be affected by the character traits of the parents and close relatives on both the patrilineal and matrilineal side.[2] The belief is that the virtues and vices of the parents and their family line are transmitted, through heredity, to their offspring. Especially in the case of outstanding physical features or social characteristics, their presence is invariably accounted for by inheritance from ancestors; if not directly inherited from the parents, they could be traced to the grandfather or to the great-grandfather. Trends of character, whether of meanness, hospitality, piety, wickedness, aggression or docility, seem to run in the families. A person who deviates from what is known about his family is referred to as 'a mistake' or 'a slip', whether in praise or blame depending on the context. One hears sayings and phrases to the effect that 'so-and-so by nature is good or bad'; 'his roots are rotten'; 'nature prevails over nurture (attaba yaghlib attatbu)'; 'people are of different metals; those who were good in the pre-Islamic period, will be equally good in Islam (annas maadin), Khiyaruhum fi al-Jahiliya, khiyaruhum fi al-Islam'.

861 It must be pointed out here that the process of socialization which is strongly felt during childhood and adolescence is not only conducted through the agency of the family, both conjugal and extended, but also

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 9.
[2] See Chapter IV, concerning the child's character traits.

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through age and sex groups. The family does not directly play as great a part in the educative process in Silwa as in towns or cities of Egypt. An equally if not more important part is played by other children, adults other than the parents, play-groups, gossip gatherings, groups of girls going to fill their jars, or groups of boys fetching fertilizer, situations of hand-washing, tea-serving, ceremonies and celebrations, and by hundreds of other life situations which go to communicate the heritage of the village life to the growing child. In Silwa, like the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala, 'the heritage of the group is communicated in situations much less clearly defined than institutions . . . (through) that multitude of daily situations in which by word or gesture, some part of the tradition is communicated from one individual to another'.[1] The literary and written aspects of the village Islamic culture are left to a few literary people who teach or recite the Holy Book and enlighten the other villagers on religious matters; while theoretical religious knowledge is the concern of a few, all are concerned with the ritual aspects of religion such as prayers and fasting.

Moreover, the slow rate of social change in the village has hardly affected the aims and methods of socialization. Children are reared approximately in the same way as their parents and are expected to imbibe the same cultural assumptions, and follow the same path. A qualification must be added here. Growing up in a folk homogeneous society does not necessarily mean a smooth, painless or unhampered process. But however traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as viable, and to that extent, bearable.[2] Intensive case studies would certainly reveal the various problems of social adjustment, and show the compensatory mechanisms of those who fail to measure up to the ritual assumptions and requirements.

[1] Robert Redfield, 'Culture and Education in the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 644.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, p. 633.

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Chapter Seven

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*857 524 CHILDHOOD is usually equated with play, and in Silwa it is the only period in which play and games are tolerated. Organized games form the major part of children's play life in Silwa. On very few occasions children engage in constructive or imaginative play by making animals, in the case of boys, or pots and jars in the case of girls, or by constructing a whirlwind toy out of paper and a palm-tree branch. Tin lids attached to a long palm-tree stick are sometimes used as wheeled instruments of play.

A child of about eight or nine years spends an average of an hour a day playing games, decreasing gradually as he grows older. Certain games are [526] favourite in winter because of the physical exertion required helping to provide warmth, while others are more favoured in summer. In our following description of games, examples of the former are Nos. 2, 20, 21, 22, which are exclusively winter games, while Nos. 15, 16, 17 are preferred in summer, being sedentary, but could also be played in winter after playing a strenuous game. Some games by their nature are exclusively night games, such as Nos. 10, 11 and 12, especially on moonlit nights.

There are no fixed times, however, for play, as children can engage in play whenever they gather in a sufficient number for a game. Sometimes one or two children are seen knocking at the doors of friends, calling upon them to join in a game. Here one sees the expression of reciprocity among children. On many occasions I heard a child blaming another for not coming to join him in play and saying, 'Don't you remember, I played with you the other time you asked me. If you don't come with me now, I won't play with you the next time.'

Immediately a group of children have gathered outside their houses they usually start playing a game. It was observed that most of the younger children or older children accompanying the toddlers would play outside their houses, while unaccompanied older children prefer to play in the recognized 'open spaces' at the edge of the village or where there is wide space between the houses.

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A descriptive account of play situations and games will be given, starting with the play of young children and followed by that of the older. 857* 524

Young children, from three to five years, are often taken outside the house by their older brothers and sisters (more often by their sisters) who are expected to look after them. They spend most of their time watching the older children playing, and they tend to ape their movements. One often sees a three-year-old, for instance, jumping about, running from one wall to another, or throwing its hands and feet about in movements similar to those of its elders. They can also be heard trying to reproduce the words and cries uttered by the others during the course of their play. Boys from four to six take great delight in playing the engine game. They line up in one row holding each other by the back. As they go forward with quick pace, they start puffing and whistling and trying to hit those who are in their way. One also sees boys of four and five standing in a row playing the game of 'Who urinates furthest?', or urinating on the sand and watching their urine as it makes a stream of water.[1] This is usually played in the absence of any adult spectators.

This age group accompanied by their older sisters takes great interest in any flight of birds, especially in the case of 'Wad el sheikh'—Ibis—which is supposed to be the fellah's friend, for it eats the worms which harm the soil and the crop. On seeing the birds overhead, the young children will twirl round and round, while their sisters clap their hands or drum rhythmically on pieces of tin. They sing together: 'Oh son of Sheikh. Give me a little loaf. Or I shall tell uncle Omara, who will beat his drum.' The children in their little song are actually asking the birds for help, threatening them, in case of failure, to tell uncle to scare them off. [825]

All the organized games from the age of six are entirely for either boys or girls, for mixing between the two sexes never occurs in such games. In spite of the fact that certain games are preferred by younger boys, while others are played more by older boys, there is always that mingling of children of this age group (six to twelve) to a varying degree. For instance, there would be one or two older boys taking the leading part in a game mostly played by young boys.

1. One of the games which is mainly played by boys between five and eight is called 'The game of the mouse' (Li'abat al-far). A group of boys builds a heap of sand or dust around which they sit. The oldest boy is the leader and remains in control throughout the game. He calls out 'The mouse has entered', at the same time inserting his index finger into the heap, and the others immediately do likewise. When he calls out 'The mouse has come out' everyone must withdraw his finger. Any delay in responding to the leader's instructions exposes the child to hits on the body from his playmates till the leader orders them to stop.

[1] See Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935, pp. 114–23, for children's play connected with the experience of urination and defaecation.

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2. Another game for the same age group is called 'Shalal-balal'.[1] This is played with two equal teams of three to five members each, each team having a prefect, 'arif', who is usually the eldest boy. The prefects stand beside each other at what may be called a base, whilst the two teams stand intermingled at a distance from them. The prefects take turns in throwing up or away in any direction a small object, usually a bone. This 'bone of contention' must be retrieved by one of the players and returned to his team-prefect at the base. The game involves brute strength as well as cunning, for if any boy can obtain the bone surreptitiously amid the general scramble, he must cunningly shake off suspicion and rapidly reach his prefect. Otherwise the scramble continues, and the bone is fought out with struggle and chase. The winner's side calls out 'Fikum Humar', which scoffingly means 'That's a donkey for you'.

3. Another game of mixed ages is called 'The Buffalo's little horn' (Kurain al gamoosee). A younger boy is slung over the shoulders of an older boy so that his trunk hangs down freely behind the latter, while his knees flex over each shoulder and his legs are crossed over the chest of the older boy. The feet are held rigidly by the older boy to perform a butting and buffeting movement representing the little horns of the bu[illegible]hree or four couples are so made up. The struggle begins amidst chal[illegible]g shouting of 'the buffalo's little horn' usually between two parties, the object being to dislodge the crossed legs and so cause 'the buffalo' to slip down. The 'horns' are thus destroyed and the two players so dealt with drop out of the game. The remaining couple resumes its attack on other survivors and so on until one couple is left as victor.

4. A similar game played by mixed ages is called 'Donkey's ride' (Rokoub Hamir). In this case a younger boy straddles the shoulders of an older boy, who holds the rider's dangling legs securely with his hands. The object of this game is to unseat the opponent by dragging or pulling him off his mount. This, however, rarely occurs, as the struggle between the riders usually takes the form of buffeting, pulling and pushing. Actual striking or slapping is not allowed. Although the younger boys seem to be the more active participants in the game yet the older boys can naturally assist in the struggle by manœuvring their positions to help their riders.

5. 'The water-carrier fight' (Harb al Sakka) is so called because the older boys carry the smaller boys slung across the small of their backs, grasping them firmly to themselves, similar to the way in which the water-skin is slung behind the water-vendor. The protruding legs are free to kick and to hit the opponents' free legs. The aim here, as before, is to dislodge 'the water-skin' from the back of 'the water-carrier'.

6. The combination of old and young boys also takes the form of a race. The older boy stands putting his arms behind his back, clasping his hands together, while the smaller boy stands with his feet on the former's hands. A line of these couples race towards the goal shouting out: 'This is the tall

[1] The two words have no apparent meaning and they are put together just to rhyme.

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palm tree that extends from here to the island' (Al nakhla attawili, min hina lil jaziri).

7. One of their favourite games is for two boys to stand side by side linking the near hands, and for a third boy to crook a leg over the joined arms and place his hand on the near shoulder of each of the other two boys. As they advance at walking pace, he hops on his one leg, then sings 'The lame cock jumps over the hen' (Arag arroug, nat al faroug), as they quicken their pace. Races can be run in this way, having teams of three.

From the age of nine and ten till thirteen and fourteen years boys play more complicated games which are, on the whole, tougher and require more muscular skill, lasting longer.

8. For instance, a boy stands facing a wall, leaning forward with his palms flat to support him, his legs apart. Another stands behind him grasping him round the waist, another stands behind this latter grasping him similarly, and so forth for as many as are playing. The last one, however, is the active player in the game. His task is to detach each member, one by one, from the chain. This he must do by grasping the last member by both legs and pulling him how he will until he has detached the person in question, dragging him away to a base. Then he returns to tackle the next victim and so on. When he has finished this, another member is dragged till the chain, thus disconnected, is reformed to start again.

9. The game of 'Drag him, bring him along' is an interesting game for this age group. The boys are divided into two teams of equal numbers, and face each other on either side of a line drawn on the ground. Each boy grasps his opposite number by the right hand, across the line. The aim is to pull the opponent over the line of demarcation towards one's own side. Directly one member has done this, two boys, one from each side, are chosen to spit on the sand, and the loser, bending over with his hands on the ground, is slapped on the buttocks by all members of the other side. This continues until the two boys declare that the spit has gone dry. If, however, the victim wishes to curtail his punishment he must say 'I am a woman', whereupon the beating ceases, and the teams line up again and resume the struggle. A confession of 'womanhood' by a boy of one side is a point scored for the other.

10. There are also various versions of hide-and-seek. The well-known type is where one hides and the rest search him out while singing in chorus:

At-talab fat fat
  The fox passed, passed
wif-dailo saba laffat
  and in his tail there are seven knots.

A variation of this is called 'Policemen and thieves' with two teams, where each member of one team (the constables) must search out his opposite number in the other team (the thieves). Having found him, the searcher

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must bring him to the base, often a task which entails struggle and strategy. After all the thieves have been rounded up, the teams change places, and the game goes on.

11. On moonlit nights the following game called 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' (Meennattak y kwaidees) is played with great zest. Two boys are chosen by turns, one to bend over on to all fours placing his head between the knees of the other facing him. The former's eyes are covered by the latter's hands, so that he cannot see. The other boys jump in turn over the crouching boy, who at each jump is asked by his partner by saying 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' If he guesses correctly, he can immediately change places with the jumper. If, however, he does not guess any of the names, the boys disperse after secretly informing the partner where they will hide, and the crouching boy must then guess where each one has hidden. A correct guess will merely bring back the boy whose place was correctly guessed from his hiding place, but inability to guess will mean that the hiding boy must be carried back to base.

12. 'The hidden heaps' (Kwajmat ad-das) is also a game played preferably on a moonlit night, with as many boys as possible joining in, as it is, *par excellence*, a game of the crowd. Two senior boys are chosen as leaders and the other boys pair up. The pairs decide on names beyond the leaders' hearing; one is wheat, the other barley, one is horse, the other donkey, and so on. They return to the leaders who alternately are given two such agreed names to choose from, and thus the two teams are formed. The leaders and their teams then set off in opposite directions, each team agreeing on the limits of an area to be covered. The aim is to make little heaps of sand or earth in out-of-the-way places, so unobtrusive that some effort must be made to discover them. The first team to return begins to make a noise, shouting, howling or calling, so that the other team shall return. Then both teams set off into the other's territory, to destroy as many of the heaps as they can find. On their way they sing:

Sharrag, gharrab, ya liamoon,
In the east, in the west, there are lemons,
Bahhar, ghabbal, ya liamoon.
In the north, in the south, there are lemons.

Then at last both teams meet again, and there is a check by each leader of the other team's work. This necessitates visits afterwards to both areas by both teams, and the heaps still left undestroyed on both sides are totalled up, the winning team having a balance of undestroyed heaps in their favour.

13. 'The little rope' (Hibail) is played with two boys seated on the ground facing each other, holding a rope tautly between them. One is called the 'Bridegroom', the other the 'Bride'. The other boys take turns to approach the 'bridegroom' and strike him with a small rope or a turban end. Then, and not before, the 'bridegroom' drops his rope and makes every

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attempt to catch the boy before the latter reaches a base. If he cannot catch the boy, but secures the striking rope, he returns and places this in front of the 'bride'. The striker cannot be 'home' without his rope and therefore must retrieve this. The 'bridegroom' may not attempt to catch the striker until the latter has touched his striking rope. It is a matter of quickness of eye, and running ability. If the 'bridegroom' catches the striker this time, the latter must take his place. If he does not and the striker reaches 'home' with his striking rope, the 'bridegroom' must reseat himself and the next boy then must advance to strike. 857* 526

14. Another game using a short-length rope is played by a group of boys. All of them stand some distance from a base, and one of their number throws the rope up into the air. Then all the boys scramble to catch hold of it as it falls and the lucky one then turns on the rest to strike whom he can while they are running back to base.

15. A game which involves no physical exertion is called 'Seega with Tab'. The tab is the instrument of scoring, and is made of a palm-tree branch (frond). It is cut a 'span' in length and a 'thumb' wide, one side being green, the other white. Four of these sticks are used in scoring. For playing, two of these sticks are held in each hand, the hands unite to shuffle them, and one hand strikes the sticks on to the other hand to fall on the ground. The scoring depends either on the number of the white sides turned up, one, two, three or four (called an egg), or on all the green sides up, which counts as six. A one must be thrown before scoring can begin, i.e. in the boys' phrase 'One must bring a boy' (a walad). On throwing an opening one the player usually shouts 'This is the boy that thrilled the village' (Walad kharab al balad). In subsequent throws a one allows an extra throw, as also does a four and a six. 857* 524

With the 'tab' a 'seega', a kind of Ludo, is played by making little holes in the ground in four rows of between usually six to ten holes in a row. These holes are called 'eyes' (Oyun). In each eye of the two outermost rows is placed a piece of stone (called dog), say sandstone for one row, and bits of pottery in the other, to distinguish the dogs of each player. One person or more can play on each side. The scoring is with the tab as already outlined. The main object is to 'eat' the opponent's dog according to the moves of the tab. The dogs can be moved only after scoring a one, they then become 'Moslems' after being 'Christians', and thereupon are called 'brothers' instead of dogs. They move along the inner row on the side nearest their home (dar) and then along the inner row on the opposite side, till it secures a place in the opponent's home. The whole crux of the game depends on a piece or pieces in a hole being moved along to a hole occupied by the opponent's piece or pieces; all these latter are thus 'eaten' and are removed from the game. Thus the one who manages to 'eat up' all his opponent's pieces first is the winner.

16. Another game scored by the 'tab' sticks is called 'The rule of the whip' (Hukm Kurbag). At least five boys are required to play this game

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properly. These things are necessary for the game: a palm-tree branch (used as a cane), a ring of rope and a very small stick. The player cannot participate in the benefits of the game until he scores a one and the person is thus 'sweetened'. Further scores are: six for a 'Sultan' who holds the ring of rope, four for a 'Minister' (vizir) who holds the cane, and three ones for the small stick.[1] Directly a Sultan and a Minister are scored, the former can command the latter to beat any 'unsweetened' boy with the cane (usually from one to ten strikes on the soles of the feet). The small stick, when it is scored, is the 'stick of mercy' and the holder can lessen any of the Sultan's penalties. As the game continues, the different symbols of command, execution and mercy change hands according to the tab scorings and thus give ample chance for retaliation, conspiracy and altercation.

17. The third game in which scoring is by 'tab' is called 'Burial' (Dafn). It is a simple game for which the participants sit in a circle. Whoever first scores three ones—sometimes the rule is consecutively, at other times cumulatively—buries the tab sticks in the ground. The player who preceded the winner must then attempt to get the sticks out by using his chin to remove the soil and his teeth to extract the sticks. This takes place amidst the jeers and words of humiliation from the whole of the group.

18. Another type of Seega is played without 'tab' scoring, where a square of five rows of five holes (Khimasiyah), or seven rows of seven holes (Sibaiyah) is made on the ground. Each player, in the case of 'Khimasiyah', has twelve 'dogs', each dozen of different material—crockery bits, stone or dried pellets of camel-dung. The players agree on who shall 'throw' first. The first player puts two of his pieces in any two of the holes except the centre hole into which no piece may be put at this stage. The other player follows by putting two of his pieces where he will. In this way both players place their pieces in all the twenty-four holes, and the centre hole is left for the first move, which is played by the last person who placed his pieces. He moves any one of his pieces adjacent to the centre hole, into the centre hole, and his opponent follows by moving any of his pieces adjacent to the vacated hole, into it. The aim is to get pieces in holes immediately adjacent either side of the opponent's piece, whereupon the surrounded piece is 'eaten' and thrown out of play. The winner is the one who is left with three pieces to the opponent's one.

For example, if player 'A' move his (o) dog to the centre hole (as indicated by the lined arrow) he would be able to 'eat' the 1 and 2 (x)s. Player 'B' would then move his dog to the vacated hole (as shown by the dotted arrow) and could eat 3, 4 and 5 (o)s, as he is allowed to return to his former position if he could 'eat' by such a move.

One of the significant features about 'Seega' is that, though it is an individual game, it is usually, whether played by boys or adults, an attraction for a gathering, everybody giving his advice as to the best move. This

[1] A residue of the Ottoman rule in Egypt seems to reflect itself in this game.

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is accepted by the players as part of the enjoyment of the game, for it is held that the 'seega' is not chaste. 857* 524

X	O	O	X	X
X	O	X[1]	O[3]	O[5]
O	X[2]		O	X
O	O	X	O[4]	X
X	O	X	X	O

19. One rarely passes the village during the day without seeing boys playing the game of 'Awal-Hawal' ('Awal' means first, and 'hawal' means change, though here it is probably a rhyming addition). The game is also called 'First faeces'. There are teams playing with a ball, called 'Jalloud', usually improvised with pieces of old cloth, though sometimes of rubber, and a striking post, which is a piece of stone set up on the ground. One team 'fields' whilst the other team have their 'innings', one at a time. The boy who is 'in' stands with his back to the fielders, and faces the striking post. He throws up the ball and on its descent hits it back behind him. This first hit is called 'Awal' (one). If any of the fielders catch it, the player is out. Otherwise, whoever retrieves it is allowed to aim at the striking post, from where he found the ball. If he strikes the post, the player is out, and another member of his team takes over. If the fielder fails to hit the post, then the player strikes the ball again, saying 'Tani' (second), and so on, if he can, to the third striking called 'Abu' (father). If he succeeds in not being caught out, or the retriever has not hit the post, then he turns his face to the fielders and strikes the ball towards them with his hand. If he succeeds three times in this way in remaining 'in', he kicks the ball towards the fielders—he is allowed three kicks in all, provided he remains 'in'. There are nine possible strikings of the ball by the players who are 'in' to score 'a donkey', or another three added if they want to have 'a donkey ride' on their opponents. In the case of the latter, the two captains do not take part in 'the donkey riding' and play by themselves. The 'ride' of the winning team lasts for as long as their captain is not 'out'. Directly the captain is 'out' the two teams change places. One of the most important rules in this game is the strict observance of the order of striking the ball, and to make a mistake in calling out the sequence is to be declared 'out' by the other team saying 'You are jumped over' (Hub alaik). 857* 526

20. 'Shattat Battat' is a very similar game to 'Awal-Hawal'. It is played

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with two sticks, one a yard, the other six inches, in length. The teams pair up, one having innings, the other fielding. A hole is dug in the ground and the smaller stick is laid across the hole. The first player strikes this smaller stick into the air by lifting it smartly with the longer stick. If the stick is not caught, whereupon the player is out, the fielder aims it at the hole where it must either hit the stick or fall into the hole, and the player is then out. Assuming that there is no catch or successful aim, the player then proceeds to build a small heap of earth on which he places the little stick sloping with the upper end free. He then strikes this upper end down, the stick flies up and he strikes it again as hard as possible. It is now a question of catching, otherwise wherever the stick falls, another heap is made and the little stick is struck again for as many as twelve times in all. If no catch has been made, the losing team must carry the winners, with the exception of the leaders who walk back to the base.

21. 'Shad' is also another absorbing game for the boys, especially the adolescents.[1] It requires a large open space, and consists of two teams made up by pairing with the usual procedure. The boys usually strip to the waist, keeping only their pants with turban strips tied round the waist. The two teams face each other in a row, each boy holding his right foot up behind him with his left hand. In their initial struggle the team that is 'in', 'hides' a member, who plays the 'bride', and he does not begin to play until later. The teams advance on each other, hopping along, the aim being to jostle, push, shove, pull, using only the flexed knee and the free hand, although charging is included. In this free fight the object is to knock over the opponent, who is 'out' if he lets his foot slip from his hand or falls on the ground. If the 'bride's' team is left with one or more against an empty field, then the 'bride is safe', and the game is won. If a few of the opposing team, or even one, survive, having vanquished all the 'bride's' team, the 'bride' then has to face those opponents, her job being to hop off to a goal without actually being engaged in any fight with the opposing hoppers. As dodging, speed, and nimbleness are required from the 'bride', it is usually the fastest player who is selected as 'bride'. If the 'bride' reaches 'home' safely—that side has won; if she is unsuccessful, the other side changes place, and chooses its own 'bride' to resume the game.

22. Another hopping game, this time without teams, is played by three boys at least. Two boys sit facing each other, their legs extended so that their feet touch each other, their legs forming a diamond shape. The third boy holds his right leg behind with his hand as in the 'Shad' game. Then follows a series of hopping feats of ever-increasing difficulty, where the two boys make him hop over them higher and wider at every turn. In hopping he must not touch any part of them with his foot or leg. The penalty is that he lies prone between their legs and is squeezed. From this the game has derived its name 'To be squeezed' (Kammatat). To release himself the victim must confess 'he is a woman' or say that 'he is in God's

[1] 'Shad' means 'Tighten yourself'.

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shelter' (a woman's phrase). Otherwise he has to push up the legs of his 857 *
'squeezers' and thus by loosening them he can escape. 59

23. A form of wrestling is indulged in by boys to test each others' strength, or settle an argument. The boys embrace each other, one arm passing round the shoulder; thus, both have an equal hold. The aim is to throw the opponent on his back. Arms in the holding position are only to be used to exert pressure, and legs can be used to trip the opponent to fall on his back. The winner declares his victory by announcing that 'he has brought so-and-so's back to the ground'. This struggle is sometimes the result of a climax in argument and threats, when one challenges the other to 'come outside' for a 'Sirai', so that they can struggle without interference from others.

These are practically all the games played by the boys, and now the 857 *
girls' games will be described. A typical game for girls is called 'Tugul' 59
(weights), which is similar to 'fivestones' played in Europe, except that in this case 'marbles' are used instead of cubes. The preparation of these little balls entails a good deal of work in shaping and smoothing pieces of sandstone, and sometimes pottery, to about half an inch in diameter. The game is usually an individual game played normally by two girls. The first play is to grasp the five 'marbles' (ten in the case of older girls) in the hand and throw them up in such a way as to intercept their fall on the ground with the back of the hand—the purpose being to scatter the marbles haphazardly. The second play is to throw up one marble, and grasp a second, catching the first as it falls. The caught 'marble' is then put aside and the remaining marbles are to be grasped in the same way during the throwing up of the first marble. The third stage is exactly the same except that two marbles must be picked up at each throw; the fourth stage entails grasping three and then one, at each throw. The final stage is to place the marbles on the back of the hand, to throw them up and grasp them all, while they fall. If at any stage the marble is not grasped, or the thrown one is not caught, or, if in the final stage all the marbles are not caught, the girl loses her turn to the other. When picking a marble, no other marble must be touched.

The game therefore requires a degree of skill and co-ordination, e.g. in the choice of marble to pick up, and in the arrangement of marbles on the back of the hand. It is a game at which girls of ten spend hours, and is enjoyed by both young and older girls. After the game is finished the girls usually dig a hole in the ground to keep their marbles for further play.

The second game is a girls' version of the 'Seega' played by boys, of four rows of four holes, and is played by four girls, two on each side. The two rows nearest each team are their 'home' rows. Two girls sit opposite the other two and one side starts. The girl on the left places her left hand behind her back and grasps the left hand of her partner, who is seated on her right. Thus both girls have their right hands free. The first girl sings a ditty, punctuating the words by putting her index finger in each hole.

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*857 524 The ditty goes on like this: 'Boos, Boos, daughter of Hussain the afflicted, has filled my thoughts at midday (when the sun is hottest). May God fill her thoughts.' The idea is to squeeze a finger of the hand held behind her back while pointing to a particular hole. Thus the two playing girls choose a hole without the other side knowing which one it is. Then the girl whose finger was squeezed hides herself behind the back of her partner, merely by leaning over sideways. The opposite team has three guesses as to the hole chosen. If they guess correctly the turn passes to them. If they do not guess correctly the girl who was hiding reappears to confirm that by showing them the correct hole. The idea of her being separated from her partner is to prevent collusion. In this case, one girl from the successful side spits into one of the 'home' rows of her opponents. The hole is then closed by throwing in some earth. The aim of the game is to close all the holes of the opponents' rows. The first side to do this has won.

*857 A very popular play situation with girls is the representation of some of the adult female occupations and ceremonies. This would involve making straw figures, bedecked in bits of cloth as men or women and children, and with the help of stones, building a house.[1] All the details of an event or ritual are played out in a make-believe way. Thus marriage, circumcision, cooking, and social meetings are all imitated.

524 526 The adult world is almost entirely deprived of organized games. Men play the 'Seega' (No. 19)* only, and on ceremonial occasions 'Hatab', which is a form of fencing played by two persons, each holding a thick stave (nabbout) of about six or seven feet long, each player trying to strike the other on his body. Women have no organized games of any sort, not even those played by the girls.

*857 517 In a sociological analysis of play situations and games it is appropriate to refer to the attitude of adults towards play. The notion of a 'dignified man' as a social ideal, contrasts with that of a man who plays. This reflects the marked dichotomy between the adult world which is considered to be serious, busy and involved in social happenings, and the children's world which, being considered transitory, uneconomic, and even frivolous, is in most cases despised by the sober adults. To describe a grown-up's action as 'childish play' is to condemn it, and such a phrase is highly offensive and might lead to bitter altercation, even blows.

Thus one can hardly find any adult who shows any interest, much less enthusiasm, in children's play and games. Indeed, it would be unbecoming in an adult. If a group of men happens to gather near some children playing, the children immediately realize the situation and have to withdraw somewhere else; otherwise they will expose themselves to a scolding or a missile directed at them. Whatever adults do, is work, for it is only 517 children who play. Yet this does not mean that they have no leisure; they spend it in exchanging news, gossip, tea and coffee drinking and visiting

[1] By the time they reach adolescence girls are expected to have made a sufficient number of dolls to be used as a decoration for their marital homes.

* [The author apparently means No. 18, see category 116, pp. 150-151 -- analyst]

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each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'. 517

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity. 857* [867] [883]

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'. 783 517

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes. 857* [506]

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

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*857 On the other hand, the writer has not seen or heard of boys of over five years old trying to play girls' games. This is partly understandable on grounds of the wide variety of boys' organized games (more than twenty) as compared with the two or three games which are played by girls. Yet the latter cannot escape from the bullying and interference of boys in their play, and thus squabbles occur, whereupon girls shout, defending themselves by saying: 'Are we boys? Go away and play with other boys.' One of the frequent complaints that the village schoolteachers have to deal with is the ever-recurring interference of boys in girls' games.

The sex dichotomy reflects itself also in the difference between boys' and girls' games with regard to their nature, content and penalties. While most of the boys' games are aggressive, requiring exertion and brute strength, the girls' games are of the sedentary type. The difference could be easily explained by the fact that the boys identify themselves with the image of the father who is supposed to be endowed with superior strength as contrasted to the mother who is the girls' model for social behaviour.

In penalty punishment 'donkey-riding', 'scoring a donkey' or confession of 'womanhood' is found in boys' games and does not occur in girls' games. Confession of 'womanhood' (as expressed in games Nos. 8 and 22) should be the last resort for a boy when pain from punishment is no longer bearable, and is almost a means of vindicating manhood. One also notices that, if two teams are playing and one team withdraws from playing when it is the other team's chance to be 'in', the latter jeers at the withdrawing team by shouting: 'You are women, you just want some "henna" in your hands.' The rough and tumble that boys' games involve is considered to be a test for hardihood and endurance.

It is also relevant to mention the different methods by which boys and girls settle their conflicts and misunderstandings during play. While boys [578] strike each other, and use the 'come outside' wrestling to decide their problems, girls usually resort to spitting, pinching, biting and vituperation.

From the viewpoint of content, boys' games hardly represent any aspect or theme of actual male life. In their play, practically no scenes of the farm work or social events are enacted. On the other hand, girls' play reproduces much of the female occupations. A girl might be playing with a small grinder, putting earth or sand into it, or with a piece of pierced tin imitating sieving, or with a crudely constructed distaff for spinning cotton or wool. Viewing it from this point of view, one might say that boys' games are on the whole undirected and socially irrelevant. The social context of girls' games could be considered as a reflection of the keenness to hasten their social maturity, and to quicken its pace compared with that of boys'.

Yet one can also see that boys' games develop their motor skill, balance and co-ordination in such a way as to prepare them for actual life. One sees small boys trying to balance themselves while walking along the trunk of a palm tree lying on the ground. Older boys of six or seven years old climb walls and walk along the top of them. In being able to do so, boys

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become a great asset in house tasks; for instance, as 'fuel fetchers'. Most of the fuel in the form of maize straw, tree branches and manure is stacked on the roof, and boys are expected to help their mothers in bringing down *the fuel stores into the house* whenever needed.

The third feature that emerges from the children's play in the village is the social significance of age. As mentioned in the description of games, the leaders are invariably chosen on an age-basis. In any game, the older boys are the senior boys, unless joined later by boys who are older still and who are entitled to take over the role of leadership. Age, as the basis of seniority, is recognised by children even at the age of five and six, where the selection of the leaders amongst this age level occasions most of the quarrels which occur. In case of disagreement as to who is the oldest boy, this is sometimes decided by height. If this brings further disagreement, the problem is referred to an older boy, who is expected to know their relative ages. Furthermore, if any boy goes complaining to his mother on any account when playing, the first question she asks him is whether the child who hit him is older than he. If so she stands by her child, otherwise she straight away tells him, 'He is your age. Go and hit him, you coward.' The shaming would be worse if the offender happens to be younger. 857* 860 861

It is also worth repeating that the two teams playing are usually balanced by the pairing up of 'equals' (nadid) which actually means 'of the same age' in the children's language. Failing to achieve that, two young boys may be given two or even three turns, if the other team has an older boy to match them. Players are usually reminded by the leaders of how well their opposite number is playing on the other side. Throughout organized or unorganized games, children are always encouraged to face the clash of 'equals' as an important experience in life.

Another important social norm reflected in play procedures is the respect that is shown to the leaders in directing the games, and the power enjoyed by them. They settle the disputes and smooth misunderstandings that occur during the game. They have to stand up to the inevitable latecomer who threatens to break up the game if not admitted. In this respect, it is also worth pointing out that they are seldom involved in the penalties that result from losing. For instance, in most of the games described they do not take part in the humiliating 'donkey-ride' which applies only to their team. 857* 860

The last feature in our sociological analysis is the place for play. For children of all ages play always takes place outside the dwelling house. When a child goes playing in the house, the normal reaction on the part of the mother, father or any older member of the family is to expel him from the house, as if play, by its nature, should be indulged in beyond the dwelling premises. While such a reaction may be attributed in some measure to the fact that children might break things or create undue disturbance, the substantial reason is that the house is a place for work, and for the carrying out of serious domestic, social, and economic tasks. The notion 857*

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is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living.

[941] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

[524] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary

[369] games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous'

[525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.

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We, however, made no detailed observations of play situations, and therefore cannot attempt to elaborate any particular theory about the psychological functions of play which cannot be pressed into any single formula.[1] Some of these theories will be woven into our argument to clarify certain points. 857*

This is a plausible approach, since we are not mainly concerned with play in generic terms, but in its special relevance to a functional study. From our limited observations and the nature and procedures of games the following three conclusions emerge: boys' play is characterized by an enormous amount of toughness and roughness, bodily contacts, representing almost a challenge to the 'serious' adult world as evidenced in grown-ups driving away playing children from their surroundings;[2] secondly, one is struck by the degree of sexuality either in the use of obscene language in connection with games or in the phallic symbols in the games; thirdly, there is a relatively meagre social content, especially in the boys' games.

The element of sexuality about many of the games described could be viewed by psycho-analysts as an expression of the 'abreaction' function of play, through which the children grow out of the attitudes connected with the Oedipus situation (passive stage) into those of the mature adult (active stage). In other words, they are representations of the transition from mother attachment to the love-object. With little secondary elaboration of sexual themes in children's games in Silwa, one could find a strong confirmation of the 'abreaction theory of play', especially to what Roheim calls 'the separation type' of games (see games Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 8). In such games Roheim maintains that the child's separation from the mother is enacted in a group of symptomatic actions such as cleaving, pinching, binding and loosening; and in this way the child builds up defences against the mother's loss and castration anxiety.[3] 857* 154

In another place Roheim maintains that the stage of latency (between five and ten) is also that of play in the child's growth, and the abundance of complicated elaboration of games in any society may be regarded as an index showing the depth and strength of this repression of sexuality at this stage. 'Varied and complicated games show that great quantities of genital libido are being diverted into other channels, i.e. sublimated.'

Taking such leads into consideration, one notices that the boys' games in Silwa are not characterized by any complications or secondary elaborations. In the light of psycho-analytical findings, the period of latency in Silwa as expressed in children's play and games does not witness the

[1] Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935. In Chapter I, she gives a masterly discussion of the various theories of play.

[2] A certain amount of roughness and aggression is a necessary element in play and games, but the games already described are extremely rough and uncouth, as the writer has attempted to show in the description of them. For the attitude of adults towards children's play, see Appendix IX, 'Moral Ideology Test'.

[3] Géza Roheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, p. 11. 'Children's Games and Rhymes in Duau (Normanby Island)', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

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*857 154 'latency' or repression of sexuality as reported by psycho-analysts.[1] On the contrary, till the ages of ten and eleven children give full swing to their rough and vulgar ways of talk in their games. Even if the period of latency is universal according to psycho-analysts, its layer of repression amongst Silwa boys during this stage is not more than skin-deep. This contrasts with girls' play where phrases or symbols of sexuality are hardly expressed. The difference is certainly a reflection of the social norms governing sex, and exerts pressure on girls earlier than on boys.

Looking at the play and games of boys in the general cultural context and the trends of process of growing up, their characteristic roughness and sexuality could be regarded as a reflection of the expressive and assertive way of dealing with equals in competitive situations. Moreover, it could also be regarded as the last fling of the children's group before the adult world makes them toe the line in the stage of adolescence. Perhaps in their resentment of the pressures of socialization, the children's group finds a healthy scope for letting off steam in their own play-life unsupervised and undirected by the requirements of their grown-ups. It is relevant to state here that free unorganized play amongst children is mainly characterized either by mimicking other children or ridiculing adults with physical deformities, especially the lame and the blind. In such ways children give vent to their feelings of aggression towards, and resentment of, the adults' world. In this way one can see that the roughness in the boys' games may be regarded as a safety-valve by which the pressures of adult authority are vented and thus relieved.

*857 867 It is to be asked to what extent the environment and the cultural conditions of the community determine, or at least predispose, the boys and girls in the village to maintain and appreciate the games they play. It cannot be mere accident that most of the games, especially boys' games, although co-operative within the team, are directed mainly in their execution towards a highly competitive goal. While it cannot be firmly established, there is a strong suggestion that the village's social structure, with the solidarity of family, clan, and division combined with the rivalry between the various families, clans and the two divisions, favours the adoption of such games.

Moreover, it is appropriate to ask to what extent maleness is connected with these boys' games in the sense that through the tough and rugged manner of play, boys gain their manly skill and endurance. In other words, to what extent can one consider these games as ways of testing boys' ability to take their part in the community which requires a demonstration of manhood by showing one's prowess in the games? With this, one also notices the quiet nature of the girls' games which is compatible with the female ethos in this community.

[1] G. Roheim, 'The Psycho-analysis of Primitive Cultural Types,' in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XIII.

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Chapter Eight

CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is important for an understanding of the social and psychological development of children in Silwa, to examine the tales, fables, and other stories transmitted to them from time immemorial.[1] Before embarking on this, however, a few introductory remarks should be made in connection with folk literature in general in this community. Such literature is relatively meagre in both quantity and quality compared with some other non-literate communities. In Silwa at present there are no myths, indigenous legends, and hardly any economic lore as in some primitive communities, all of which attempt to explain the nature of the universe, the history and origin of the people, or transmit traditional knowledge as applied to the solution of economic problems.[2] There is no doubt that, before the advent of Islam, and of Christianity before that, the Ancient Egyptian myths and folk literature must have been the oral code guiding the beliefs and values of folk people in Ancient Egypt. The survival of these is still evident, in spite of Islamic doctrines, in beliefs and ideas about jinn, invisible counterpart (Karina), saints, sacrifice, the evil eye, and so forth.[3] The changes in religious and social attitudes of the people, through becoming part of the Moslem society, have obscured the previously existing system of oral tradition. Perhaps some of its elements still persist in a modified form in the folk tales and children's stories found at present in rural Egypt.

The adult attitude towards children's stories is very similar to their attitude towards children's games, and there is hardly any adult, especially amongst men, who admit that he tells stories to his children. Stories, as seen through the 'puritanic' eyes of adults, are considered to be demonic, and of no practical value. Story-telling is also included in the concept of dissipated leisure (lahw) which such a stoically religious community does

[1] G.P. Lestrade, 'Traditional Literature', in *The Bantu Speaking Tribes*, ed. by I. Schapera, London, 1946.

[2] The full text of the stories is given at the end of this chapter.

[3] See E. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, London, 1926.

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not accept as one of the commendable spheres of indulgence in a pious life.[1] While mothers may occasionally tell their children a story at night, fathers could never be expected to do it, as it might encourage that intimacy and levity towards them which is incompatible with the ideal of paternal respect. Story-hearing and telling is a feature of the child and adolescent groups. The writer has not found literate people in Silwa entertaining the reading of novels in the modern sense, as they are regarded 'unreal' and of no immediate value.[2] Children and adolescents must be weaned away as quickly as possible from such imaginative frivolities like story-telling, and acquire the didactic literature of proverbs and wise sayings that enable the boy to cope with the realistic and matter-of-fact affairs of life. The accumulated wisdom of the past, the adults think, is contained in these proverbs and the reported deeds and acts of men of religious or social prestige. They are inordinately fond of quoting proverbs and maxims whenever an occasion for them arises. Rattray has observed the African's predilection for proverbs in his speech: much the same might be said for Silwa. He states that the best retort 'for any new-fangled suggestion or argument, however convincing, is to quote some proverb, however banal and inept, for such a reply is invested with all the force and sanctity of immemorial usage, and therefore conclusive'.[3]

Story-telling also includes the interesting events that happened in the village, or that happened to children. It is a more preferable pastime in winter than in summer, when boys, and occasionally girls, gather at a cosy corner outside the house 'to curtail the long winter nights' as one of the boys put it. On the whole, one can say that a child, on the average, spends an hour a week in these story-telling sessions. But this does not mean that all children take part in these sessions, or know fairy tales and stories. In fact, quite a few children, of both sexes, whom I asked in the compulsory school and in the neighbourhood, knew no stories of any kind. If parents tolerate these story-telling sessions, they do not consider them of any educative value at all.

Children, however, listen to stories and tell them to each other, not in the house or in the presence of the father, but usually outside the house. They will stop their narration on the approach of an adult, and consequently the writer was not able to listen to or observe any of their normal sessions. These sessions are seldom held during the day, as the boys believe that story-telling in daylight brings wrath, like sleeping in the late afternoon (nawmat al asr). Here one sees the functional relationship between children's leisure and their economic responsibilities. Through such beliefs, with their concomitant emotional effects, the scope for flouting responsibility for work is delimited in a roundabout way. Like play, the community

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[1] See Chapter VII for the connection of 'lahw' and play.

[2] There are no novels at all amongst the books that the villagers possess.

[3] R. S. Rattray, 'The African Child in Proverb, Folklore and Fact', in *Africa*, Vol. VI, 1935, p. 426. For some of the proverbs collected in the village, see Appendix VI.

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reluctantly admits the value of story-telling to children, accepts its occurrence at night as a safety valve, as then it would not wreck or endanger the 'puritanic' atmosphere.[1] 857* 538

The first eleven stories recorded in this study are a common stock for most of the boys and girls in the village, but I found no girl who knew any of the rest of the stories. This is understandable, as these stories are usually related and heard by boys and girls till the age of eleven or twelve, but after this age story-telling among girls is frowned upon and punished. This is the main reason why their stock of tales is meagre compared with that of the boys. Here, as in play, girls are expected to toe the line of adults earlier than boys. 857* 539

Most of the stories collected were from the compulsory school children. By no means all of them knew the full text of the stories, but most of them at least recognized or felt they knew the first eleven stories. In examining those who had known some of the stories, they repeated them in an almost identical way.

Children normally begin their narration of a story by saying: 'There existed' (Feeh), whereupon the listeners reply, 'God exists' (Allah feeh); older boys and old men would normally begin by, 'It happened and in the past many a thing happened, and upon God we rely' (Kan ya ma kan, wa 'ala allah attuklan).[2] The younger boys finish off by exclaiming, 'I've been to your house and come back, I've eaten the hen before the cock' (Ruht 'indakum wi jeet, akalt al farkha gabl addik).

In the text of the stories and tales, one can find reflections of many of the social, moral and religious norms and attitudes. In the manifest content of the stories, such norms and attitudes as those governing the relationships between members of the family, social expectations, religious aspirations and desire for children are not difficult to discern and need no elaboration. [867]

Moreover, anthropologists and psychologists have also tried to explain the latent content of folk literature, myth and legends. The interpretations of Freudian, Jungian, and other schools of psychology have been occasionally alluded to in the footnotes of the story texts.[3] The orthodox Freudians, as well as the Jungians, because of their racial and generalized interpreta-

[1] With regard to the fact that folk-stories are characteristically told at night, Hermant advances the theory that the choice of night is psychologically significant as after the day's work is finished and both narrator and listeners are tired, their critical powers of thinking, their attention and will are slackened. Thus social activities that are considered inappropriate during the day seem acceptable at night; in the same way certain themes in stories are exclusively acceptable during the evenings, and are incorporated in the folk-tale. See E. J. Lindgren, 'The Collection and Analysis of Folk-Lore', in *The Study of Society*, p. 360.

[2] This beginning is very similar to the way story-tellers in Iraq introduce their stories, as reported by E. S. Stevens, although by omitting 'ya' he misunderstood the meaning of the phrase and translated it as 'There was, there was not'. *Tales of Iraq*, London, 1931.

[3] C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (translated by R. F. C. Hull), London, 1951.

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tions, take us away from the sociological relevance of fairy tales and folk stories. This approach has been criticized by anthropologists and the neo-Freudians who have a deeper appreciation of the cultural phenomena. Bidney asserts that great myths, for example, are great precisely because they lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations and thus perform wonders in stimulating the creative imagination.[1] The need is felt to elicit the aid of oral traditions to contribute to the understanding of culture, and for its integration more fully with other cultural data 'to deepen our knowledge of human nature, the functioning of human societies, and the psycho-dynamics of the adjustment of individuals to the exigencies of their culturally constituted worlds'.[2] In the light of this, we have referred to some tales as having 'Oedipus reflections', meaning by that not the Freudian libidinal desires of the infantile situation, but expressions of one of the fundamental aspects of interpersonal relationships, that of the attitude towards authority.[3]

In his formulations of the concept of the 'basic personality structure', Kardiner points out the impact of social institutions on personality development. He has made use of folklore as a check, as well as a lead for the understanding of personality orientations as manifested in different thought processes and sequences, and different fantasy life. Folklore, in his view, is not an expression of general human psychic fantasies, and autochthonous creation, but related to the realities of social situations. Moreover, it expresses the current strains, conflicts and frustrations of the individual and his culture.[4] The fruitfulness of such an approach to folklore is also expressed by Susanne Langer, who maintains that folk tales, whether the animal fable, the trickster story, the ghost story, or the fairy tale, can be regarded as mirroring subjective wishful thinking and reflecting certain cultural frustrations of a given society.[5]

In our analysis of folk and children's tales in Silwa, the formulations of Kardiner are relevant and useful in an attempt to understand some of the problems related to the personality development in this community. We may regard these tales as expressions of trends in the psycho-dynamic

[1] He further claims that no single correct interpretation can be valid for any myth or legend, and that psycho-analysis, by applying their assumptions to them, are but inventing 'scientific myths' of their own. David Bidney, 'Concept of Myth and Psycho-cultural Evolution,' in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 25. See also R. Linton in his Foreword in Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. xvii.

[2] A. Irving Hallowell, 'Myth, Culture and Personality', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 544.

[3] Erich Fromm, *The Forgotten Language (an Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths)*, London, 1952.

[4] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 214. He states that a cursory comparison of the folklore of Trobriand and Kwakiutl culture shows that each is the product of different life goals, different perceptions of institutional realities, different impulses which must be controlled and different methods of controlling them. (p. 127.)

[5] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 1948, quoted by David Bidney, op. cit., p. 17.

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adjustment of the individual in his society, revealing life goals, desires, fears, tensions of living in this environment.

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In the stories in question one may discern the following three basic trends permeating them, or a combination of two or three of them in the same story. The first trend is the constant recurrence of themes of food, especially meat. If children tend to repeat mechanically the text of the tale, they certainly give wide and vivid scope to their imagination when the theme of food crops up during narration. The exclamation of 'Ya salam' is always ready to be uttered when a boy dwells expressively on a food theme in a story and thus gives other children some gratification for their fantasies about food.[1] In the tales, however, reference to situations where food is eaten, given, enjoyed, hidden, or some risk undertaken in obtaining it, is abundant. This could be correlated with other cultural data such as 'the sanctity of food', the belief that somebody might 'breathe on bread or food' and thus render it dangerous to eat, and hence the custom of covering bread on a tray of food from the eyes of a stranger, or inviting him to 'have a bite' if he comes unexpectedly.[2] One is justified in calling these themes expressions of a 'food anxiety' according to Kardiner. It is only possible for the writer here to suggest the relationship between this 'food anxiety' and some social forces, such as the low level of subsistence economy in the village, the precarious conditions of agricultural techniques in which hard work does not always reap its adequate rewards, being threatened before the introduction of perennial irrigation by Nile flooding and occasionally by torrents and uncontrollable plant pests. Consequent on all this is the fellah's rationalization of fate, with regard to life's adversities.

Secondly, in some of the stories one glimpses reflections of the nature of the Oedipus myth: in story VIII, where the child kills his stepmother (symbolizing the bad mother in the dual mother role) and then his father; in story XIII where children are drowned in the well by their father, and the one like the 'bob tail' who managed to emerge into life again and achieve union with the mother; in story XVII, where Jiha takes his revenge by killing the father of the thieves with his 'bull's tail' and gains access to the wealth of the cave (mother). In some stories there is emphasis on masculinity, e.g. in story III where the only billy-goat that survives the ordeal of the wolf (the devouring father) is the one which is aware of its masculine capacity represented by its horns, enabling it to stand up to the father. Like the symbolism in the children's games, their tales also express certain anxieties of the castration type, especially in those stories of Jiha, who is deprived of his bull, of his money and of his blanket (XV, XVI, XVII).

[1] This was quite obvious during some of the 'children's hour' I used to hold.

[2] Making food covers (waleel, pl. willat) out of palm-tree leaves is a flourishing female occupation, and practically every girl starts learning how to make them before she gets married. See also Chapter IV for the villagers' secretiveness concerning food.

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On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

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The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

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[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 145.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

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Another tentative psychological explanation of fairy tales and folk tales in their social setting is advanced by Bartlett. He argues that the details and plots of such stories are usually derived from social customs and institutions. As social products, their psychological interest lies in ascertaining which of the three dominant tendencies of the instinctive social relationships, comradeship, assertiveness, and submissiveness, figure largely in them. In determining which of these instinctive tendencies takes first place in its expression in folklore, the cultural conditions and the external environment may be regarded as one of the most important factors. Thus in the folk tales, one could detect an expression of 'the preferred persistent social group tendencies' which could also be found in other fields of the same group's culture.[1]

Looking at these stories from such an angle, one can claim that the majority reflect 'assertive instinctive tendencies'. In story I the cock, which is the weakest of all the other animals mentioned, stands as the sole authority for information; in II the cock and the goat triumph over the donkey; in III the billy-goat asserts himself over the wolf; in V the cock (symbolizing the child) won the day with all those he dealt with; in VII the fox managed to laugh at the fisherman; in IX the boy succeeds in eloping with the chief's daughter; in X the nanny-goat scorches the wolf; in XI the scabby orphan boy asserts himself by having access to things which his uncle does not know and proves to be trickier than his uncle's wife; in XIV the poor boy and his sister get rid of their cousins who were richer and numerous; in the three Goha stories, XV, XVII, XVIII, the ridiculous and insignificant man asserts himself over his enemies and those who ridicule him. In story XVI he failed because of his profanity, for which he was deprived of his money.[2]

Following Bartlett's hypothesis, we find that the assertive instinctive tendencies loom large in most of these stories and could be regarded as 'the preferred response' in the group. This conclusion corresponds largely to our interpretations in the light of Kardiner's formulations. The weak, the insignificant, and the ordinary asserts its identity and becomes, through fantasy, as equivalent or even superior to the more fortunate and the more powerful. The link between 'assertiveness' as an over-reaction to an ego structure sensitive to being outdone or to feeling of inferiority is confirmed by the findings of clinical psychology.

In this connection, it is not without significance that one of the first phrases that the child learns to speak is 'May God curse your father', as a retort encouraged by his parents to anyone who may try to humiliate him.

[1] For F. C. Bartlett's views, I relied on the summary given in E. J. Lindgren, op. cit., pp. 358–66.

[2] In this connection the evidence from folklore and proverbs confirms Westermarck's observation that amongst the Moors God is always mentioned in a reverent manner. 'There is nothing of that familiarity or jocularity which is frequent in European sayings referring to Him, causing annoyance to puritanic writers.' *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 51.

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So far we have been chiefly concerned with analysis of tales mainly from a functional point of view, especially as data to be brought to bear on the socio-psychological problems of culture-personality. We have not exhausted the various ways of analysis of such oral traditions such as discerning a given motif, a tale type, a quality of inner experience, a sense of wonder and astonishment, and so forth.[1]

I

Once upon a time a cock witnessed the falling of the roof of a house, then the fox came along to enquire as to what happened, to which the cock replied, 'Can't you see?' Then came the wolf, who asked the fox about the matter, but the latter referred him to the cock saying that he himself did not know. Then came the tigress (daba) asking the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock. Then came the silowa, who asked the tigress, who referred her to the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock.[2]

II

There were once a goat, a cock, and a donkey who tended a farm together. One morning, on going together to the farm they discovered that the crops were eaten. As the goat and the cock were staying in the same house, they suspected the donkey of secretly eating the plants, but he denied it as he alleged he was lying sick in bed the night before. As they did not believe him they asked him to join them in taking a vow whilst jumping over the well. The cock crowed 'cock-a-doodle-do' and jumped over the well. The goat bleated 'na-na' whilst successfully jumping over the well. Then came the donkey braying 'hee-haw', but while he was jumping a wolf, who had lain hidden in the well, grabbed the donkey by the leg and gobbled him up.[3]

III

Three billy-goats were attacked by a wolf. Before he started tearing them to pieces to eat them, he asked the first billy-goat, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The wolf tore him apart and devoured him. Then the wolf asked the second one, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The same fate befell him. Then the wolf asked

[1] For a comprehensive survey of the various ways of analysis of folklore see E. J. Lindgren, op. cit. For a most stimulating analysis of 'The Oedipus Myth, and the fairy tale of Red Riding Hood', see E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*, London, 1952.

[2] Reflections of fear of committing oneself can be detected in this tale, an expression of the uneasy climate of interpersonal relations in the community.

[3] Apart from its manifest moral content, the latent content could be regarded as one with Oedipus reflections taking the donkey as the father, and the goat and cock as mother and child respectively.

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the third goat, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' The answer this time was, 'They are loaded guns'.[1] Immediately the wolf heard this, he fled.

IV

Once upon a time there was a bride who, having been adorned with jewels, went to the Nile to gaze upon the water. While she was standing there she was seen by a crocodile, an animal which is always attracted by the glitter and tinkle of jewellery. Immediately the crocodile saw this beautiful girl, he advanced to swallow her whole and dived back into the the water. The girl lived in the crocodile's belly for a long time, until one day when the beast was on land, she remembered that she had a dagger, which she used to hack her way out of the crocodile, thus escaping alive to be reunited with her husband.[2]

V

A cock was once scratching the ground with his claws and found some seeds which he took to a woman and asked her to bake him two loaves of bread, which she did. The cock took the two loaves of bread and during his wanderings he found a hungry man tending his geese, to whom he offered the two loaves. The man ate the loaves, and enjoyed eating them, as they were made of wheat. But after that the cock asked the man either to hand back his loaves or to give him a goose instead of them, so the man offered him a goose.

The cock found another man tending his sheep, and waiting for a chicken or a goose to eat, which the cock was ready to offer. In the same manner, after the shepherd had eaten the goose, the cock insisted on either having back his goose or getting a ram instead, so the shepherd gave him a ram.

The cock wandered further, and found a group of men tending buffaloes, and looking for a ram to kill for a special meal, and the cock offered them his ram. After the meal was over, he made the same plea and got a buffalo.

The cock, wandering still further, arrived at a village where he found a wedding, the celebration of which was lacking meat, and he offered his buffalo. After the feasting, the cock went to the bridegroom and asked him to return his buffalo, or let him have the bride. So at last he got the bride and married her, and they lived together happily ever after.

[1] Assuming that these tales are transmitted from a time immemorial, this reference to 'loaded guns' must be a comparatively recent modification.

[2] This resembles the well-known stories of the hero in the belly of the whale. Joseph Campbell states that in the Eskimo tale of Raven and the whale, the principal deed of the adventurer is to make fire in the interior of the monster, thus bringing about the whale's death and his own release. As fire-making is symbolic of the sex act, the tale denotes the passage of the hero through the threshold of life into a sphere of rebirth symbolized in the life-centring, life-renewing act. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 90, 91, 248. Erich Fromm maintains that such stories, like that of Jonah, express an inner experience for a condition of being protected and isolated, of safe withdrawal from communication with other human beings. *The Forgotten Language*, p. 29.

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A mother had two boys, one called the clever boy (nasih), the other called the simpleton (dalihi). The simpleton went home to bring the midday meal for his brother, who was working on the farm. The meal consisted of loaves of millet and one loaf of wheat bread, besides a large pat of butter. On his way to the field the simpleton discovered that he was followed by his shadow, to which he constantly said, 'May God curse your father, why are you following me? Take this piece of bread and go away.' He kept throwing pieces of millet bread to his shadow until he had used up all the millet loaves.

Later on he found a cave into which he threw the loaf of wheat bread, uttering in horror, 'Oh, this is my father's open mouth. My father is hungry and I must feed him.' Thus he distributed all the food which he was supposed to take to his brother.

A little later he found some cactus which looked very dry, so he immediately threw the pat of butter on to these plants, saying disgustedly, 'Oh, this is my mother's hair, it looks so dry, I cannot bear it'.

On his arrival at the field his brother asked him about the food, and he answered in an enraged voice, 'How can you enjoy any food when your younger brother was following me all the way, while your father is starved and while your mother's hair is dry?'

The clever brother, therefore, had to go home to get his meal, leaving his simple brother to look after the sheep. While he was tending the sheep the simpleton ordered them to eat only the upper part of the grass and not the lower, on pain of punishment. By the time the clever brother returned the simpleton had killed all the flock except a goat and a sheep. When the former asked the latter about what he had done, the answer was that the flock had not obeyed his orders.

At the close of the evening the two brothers went home together, and on the way they found a horse, but the simpleton insisted on killing it and dividing it equally. Later they found a huge kite which they rode, but while they were on its back, the idiot stuck his finger into the kite's anus, and by so doing, the kite lowered her rump. In this way the simpleton fell off her back and was killed, while the clever boy returned home safely.[1]

VII

A fisherman on his way back from the river with his basket full of fish, saw a fox. When he came near the fox, the latter lay stretched on the

[1] This is one of the most favourite tales amongst both boys and girls. According to C. Jung the 'shadow' in this tale is an archetype embracing the inferior and less commendable part of a person (*The Integration of the Personality*, p. 20). The story, in Jungian psychology, could be interpreted as representative of the negative (idiot) and positive (clever) brother, the unconscious and the conscious, aspects of personality. Self-realization and individuation can only come through the co-operation between the two aspects, and the unconscious content can overwhelm, inhibit and even destroy personal fulfilment. (C. Jung and E. C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to the Science of Mythology*, p. 14.)

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ground pretending to be dead. The fisherman picked the fox up and put it in his basket on top of the fish. Surreptitiously the fox began to eat the fish, and after he had gobbled them all up, jumped out of the basket and mocked the fisherman, saying, 'I have triumphed over you' (literally, I have seared you). 'You will never be able to use my skin either in winter or in summer, while I have eaten up all your fish.'

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VIII

There was a man who had first a daughter and then a son. After the death of their mother their father married again. Their stepmother[1] hated them even more because she herself had not borne any children, and she used to make them work very hard for her.

One day she gave her stepchildren two baskets of equal size to fill with fuel (animal dung, bits of straw and wood found along the roads). She promised a loaf of wheat bread and an egg to the one who filled the basket first. The brother did not gather much fuel, and for most of the time he was taking fuel out of his sister's basket, and putting it into his own basket. In this way he filled his basket first, and returned home, asking his stepmother for the promised reward. The stepmother told him to wait until she grilled the egg in her neighbour's oven, and asked him to go to sleep in the meanwhile. On her return the boy was sleeping, whereupon she slew him with a sharp knife, put him in a pot, and proceeded to cook him as if he had been a goose.

When the sister returned, she enquired about her brother, and the stepmother replied that she had sent him on an errand to his maternal aunt. She asked her to go on heating the pot with the fuel, asking her not to take the lid off the pot. But while the stepmother went out to bake the bread in the neighbour's oven, the girl lifted the lid and saw her brother's finger: she was grieved and started to cry. When the stepmother returned she asked her why she was crying, and whether she had lifted the lid. The girl answered that she was not crying, but that her tears were caused by the smoke, as she had to blow the fire constantly for the fuel was not dry enough.

In the evening the father came home and the wife offered him his meal which consisted of his son's flesh. On enquiring why his daughter was crying, the stepmother told him that she refused her dinner, and that she could not find any reason for her grief. When the bones were thrown away, the girl collected them all and put them in a jewel box which she hid under the water-jar from which the family drank. After a while, the child's ghost (sul) appeared, singing a beautiful tune: 'I am a green sparrow, who was killed by my stepmother, and whose flesh was eaten by my bloody father (aboya alars), and whose bones were collected by my affectionate sister.'

One day while the stepmother was grinding corn, the boy sang the

[1] The stepmother is always referred to descriptively as the wife of the father (literally, the father's woman: 'marat al-abu', clas. Arabic, 'imrat al-ab').

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previous ditty for her, and she asked him to repeat it, expressing her admiration for his beautiful voice. But he refused to do so, unless she opened her mouth, and on her so doing, he dropped a stone of poison in her mouth which caused her death. He sang likewise to his father, when he was manipulating the 'shadoof', and was asked to repeat the song. The boy refused to do so unless his father stretched himself in the water, and on the latter's so doing, the boy seized the opportunity to drown his father and thus got rid of him like his stepmother.

The boy sang the same refrain to his sister when she was filling her jar from the river, and on her asking to repeat it, he requested her to open her mouth, into which he dropped a piece of sugar. He used to go to different places especially on ceremonial occasions, singing the same tune, repeating it on condition that the hearers should give him something edible or valuable which he would always take home to his sister.[1]

IX

There was a man whose wealth consisted mainly of camels, which he used to breed and rear. God gave him a son whom he sent to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran. After the death of this man, the wife took over the husband's task of tending the camels and thereby caused much embarrassment to her son in the Kuttab, as other boys used to sneer at him for letting his mother do the work which he himself ought to be doing. The boy, thus goaded by his mates, told his mother of his wish to do the same job as his father, but his mother tried to convince him that it was better for him to continue memorizing the Koran till he finished it. At last, however, the boy insisted on relieving his mother of her task, and began to look after his father's camels.

One day the boy, now reaching the marriageable age, while fetching water from the well for the camels, noticed a beautiful girl on a camel followed by a slave. He invited her to bring her camel to drink from his well, and when he caught a glance of her at close quarters he immediately fell in love with her. The girl also fell in love with him and as a gesture of her love, dropped her silver anklet into the well. After she had left, the boy went down into the well and retrieved the anklet: this made him even more desirous of marrying her.

[1] This is another favourite. In this story there are Oedipus reflections; the child by killing his father and bad mother (stepmother), his incestuous longings triumph at last by uniting himself to his sister (which is also a symbol of the good mother). However, the tale represents a state of regression. According to Freud, the growing out of psycho-sexual desires for incestuous longings, achieving a state of horror with regard to incest, is a sign of maturity (*Totem and Taboo*, p. 17). According to Erich Fromm this regression is due to fear of authority and repressed desire for dependency, a conflict between the desire for independence and freedom in growth and social arrangements frustrating the scope for such growth. In the light of his latest book, *The Forgotten Language*, this story could be interpreted as representing the victory of the matriarchal principle (mother and sister) of love and affection over the patriarchal principle of authority and hierarchy.

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From that day the boy's health deteriorated, and he lost his appetite. The mother hired someone to look after the camels, and directed all her attention to the treatment of her son with charms and medicine. One medicine man told her that her son was not actually sick, but in love; and on enquiring about this, the son confessed everything to his mother. Then she gave him the best she-camel she had and told him to go and visit the girl's people.

On his arrival in the girl's village, he discovered that the girl's father was the chief of his tribe, and one who never allowed any stranger to enter his land. Somehow the boy managed to contact the slave who had followed the girl on her errand, and who told him that the girl's father had a custom of confining himself to his home for a week, appearing publicly in the following week, and that that very day was his first day of retirement. The boy was pleased at this news and enquired of the slave the best way of speaking to his beloved. The slave told him that he should follow her camel which, at the end of the day, went to the house to be received by the girl herself. So the boy tied his she-camel to the girl's he-camel, and in the evening he succeeded in meeting her. During the night they fled away on their camels from that land.

During their sleep on the way, another chief passed by and admired the sleeping girl's beauty, and desired her for himself. While the chief was planning to abduct the girl, his he-camel had intercourse with the boy's she-camel, a fact which the boy discovered when his she-camel became pregnant a short time after he returned home. Despairing and frustrated, the boy returned to his mother, where he relapsed into his sickness.

When the boy's camel brought forth a he-camel, the mother told her son that it was this young camel that would help him to rescue his beloved as it would run faster than its father, the chief's camel. After three years, when the young camel had grown up, the boy went to the same spot where his beloved had been taken away, traced the footprints of the camel on which the chief had ridden, and thus reached the land where his beloved was.

On his arrival, he enquired about her from an old woman, who told him that the girl was now married to the chief and had two sons by him. The old woman, however, arranged a meeting between the boy and his once beloved, who on seeing him told him that it was now all over between them, but that she would tell of a device to enable him to have his revenge. She told him that her husband had married another wife before her, one who had four daughters, and they would be walking in the village all by themselves that night while all the other people in the tribe would retire to their homes, so she told him to take a chance of snatching the chief's eldest daughter and running off with her.

The plot succeeded and the boy eloped with the chief's eldest daughter. Immediately the chief heard about the news, he rode on his camel in

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pursuit, but could not catch up with the elopers. Then he gave up chasing, after his realization that the man who had carried off his daughter was none other than the person from whom he had stolen his beloved. The chief inferred this from the fact that the camel that the daughter-snatcher was riding must have been the son of his camel and thus much faster than his sire.

When the chief returned home, he asked his wife about the boy's land, and after a time he equipped himself with gifts and food and went with some members of his tribe to the boy's home. On his arrival, he blessed the marriage of his daughter to the boy, and told him that he had avenged himself.

x

There were three nanny-goats who met three men, one carrying clover, the second wood, and the third bricks. The first nanny-goat asked one of the men to give her the clover so that she might build a home for herself, and he gave it to her. The second goat asked the second man to give her the wood for the same purpose and he gave it to her. The third goat asked the third man to give her the bricks and he did so.

Each of the nanny-goats built a house for herself from the material she had received from each man. Now, one day the wolf visited the goat who was living in the clover house, enticing her to come out, but when she refused, he jumped into her house, and devoured her. The second day he went to the second goat living in the wooden house and asked her to come out, but when she also refused, he jumped into the house and ate her. On the third day he went to see the third goat living in the brick house, and when she did not come out he endeavoured to jump into her house, but in vain.

Then the wolf tried to trick the surviving nanny-goat by telling her that he knew of some good grass where she could graze. She asked him where it was and promised to meet him there at an appointed time, but she went earlier, fed herself, and returned home. After the wolf had discovered that she had tricked him, he went again to her house. When he knocked at the door the goat bleated, 'I have eaten the grass and triumphed over you'. This time the wolf tried to tempt her with oranges growing in a place he knew about. As before she enquired as to where the place was, and went to it earlier than agreed. When he arrived at the place, he saw her at the tree. Then he said, 'This is a black day for you, you shan't escape from me'. On hearing this she threw an orange into the distance, and while he was running to get it she escaped home.

Then the wolf decided to make another attempt by asking the goat to invite him inside her house. She agreed, and told him to enter through a hole in the roof. While he was climbing she put a bathful of boiling water underneath the hole in the roof, and when the wolf jumped he found himself scalded and stuck in the hot water. He entreated the goat to rescue

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him, but she left him there to die, and henceforth she lived in peace and tranquillity.[1]

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XI

There was once a scabby boy who was an orphan (literally one who had eaten all his relations), except for an uncle with whom he was living. The uncle had a wife who was in love with another man, and the scabby boy knew about this affair while the uncle did not.

One day the boy left his uncle in the field and went home unexpectedly, hiding himself behind the door. The lover came to see his uncle's wife, who told him that she would cook him a chicken and leave it on the shelf, and that he could help himself to it late that night. After the boy had heard this he went to the farm and resumed his work after making excuses to his uncle for his absence. When the scabby boy and his uncle returned home in the evening the wife offered them millet bread and salt for their meal. Just before they started eating, a cat came along, and the boy pinched it till it howled in pain. The uncle asked the boy why the cat was screaming, and the latter replied, 'The cat says there is a cooked chicken on the shelf'. Then the uncle went by himself to the shelf, and on discovering the chicken asked his wife why she had not placed it before them. She apologized, saying that she had completely forgotten it.

This plot of the wife promising the lover special food which he could fetch at night, of the boy overhearing what was said, and of the uncle asking about what the cat said on her screaming, went on for several days, and on every occasion the wife managed to give good excuses for not offering her husband the good food. The lover, however, began to think that the woman was deceiving him, but she told him what was happening and they decided to kill the cat. On the following day the woman promised her lover a turkey which she would hide in the chaff. The boy overheard this also, and when the uncle returned home, he was offered the usual millet loaf and salt. Then suddenly the boy told his uncle that he had forgotten to give the cow its evening feed, and went to the barn, and delved into the chaff until he had uncovered the turkey. He dashed back to his uncle, telling him that he had found a turkey but that he was not sure whether it was dead or alive. The uncle went to see about this, and on his finding the turkey violently rebuked his wife, who again excused herself on the ground that she had forgotten about it.

The lover became more annoyed than ever, and the wife agreed with him this time to take a cooked ram to his farm. But as she did not know the whereabouts of her lover's farm he decided to show her the way by scattering chaff along the path to his farm. Again the boy overheard this, and he removed the chaff and scattered the lover's trail, making one lead-

[1] If the nanny-goat symbolizes 'the child', then this story interpreted on the reductive level (infantile situations) represents an Oedipus situation where the child kills the father (wolf), and lives in peace in the house (mother), or according to Erich Fromm it could be representative of male-female conflict.

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ing to his uncle's farm. The woman took the ram and followed the trail, but to her bewilderment she found herself at her husband's farm.

The wife then decided to poison both the uncle and the boy, and while she was telling her lover about it, the boy again overheard her. He went straight to the drug seller and requested him that if his uncle's wife came to buy poison from him, he should sell her the dried yoke of eggs and advise her to sprinkle it over the cooked chickens which should be eaten for dinner every evening during the next week, and that this device would bring more decisive results than ordinary poison by the end of the week. The boy told his uncle about the plot, and they agreed to pretend to be dead at the end of the week.

On their supposed death, people began wailing, whilst the lover came to console the wife, he also told her, 'We are triumphant now, you are the mare and I am the horse'. Then the boy woke his uncle, saying, 'Wake up uncle, before the horses trample on you'. The uncle arose immediately, and murdered both his wife and her lover.

XII

Once upon a time there was a barren wife who had always longed for a daughter, and she took a vow that if she had one she would call her 'Hab-al-ruman'. After she had borne a daughter she became jealous of her, and used to ask the moon on its appearing every night, 'Who is prettier, I or Hab-al-ruman?' The moon's answer was invariably 'Hab-al-ruman'. As the mother felt snubbed by such an answer, she decided to get rid of her daughter, of whom she was so terribly jealous; she thereupon handed her over to an old woman telling her to abandon her on the mountains.

It so happened that after a short time the young daughter was rescued by the Sultan's son, who took her to his palace and looked after her. Meanwhile, the mother repeatedly asked the moon the same question, and the moon insisted on giving the same answer. At last she asked the moon where her daughter was, and on learning that she was in the Sultan's palace, she gave an old hag some poison to rub between her daughter's fingers on shaking hands with her in the palace. One day when the Sultan's son came to the palace, he found Hab-al-ruman dead. He then placed her in a chest, filling a similar chest with gold, and ordered the two chests to be left in the mountains. The 'ghool' and the 'silowas' were passing along one day through the mountains and found the two chests; Hab-al-ruman's chest fell to the ghool, who, on opening it, found this beautiful dead girl, and began to wash her for burial. But during the washing, as the ghool was rubbing between the girl's fingers, she suddenly came to life. The ghool looked after her until she grew up, and married her to a royal prince. By the Prince she had a boy whom the ghool snatched away. The Prince was grieved, and his grief became heavier after the ghool had snatched away a second and later a third son. At last the Prince

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could bear it no longer, and accused his wife of being an ogress—a silowa who ate her children. To find consolation the Prince decided to perform his pilgrimage, and before he left for Mecca he asked his wife what gifts she would like from the Holy Places, and was surprised to learn that her request was for two boxes, one filled with sabbar, and the other with henna.

On his return from the Higaz, the Prince decided to take another wife who might bear him children who would survive. This made the heart of his wife heavy and she would open the box of sabbar chanting 'Oh, sabbar, give me patience, oh, henna, let the ghool have mercy on me'.[1] The Prince went forward with the preparations for his marriage, and while the ceremony was being publicly announced, and the people sending in their gifts, the ghool surreptitiously brought the Princess's three sons back to their mother. Immediately the children started looking into the cooking utensils in which meat was being cooked for the occasion, but the servants pushed them away, preventing them from getting any meat out of the utensils. The boys were annoyed and exclaimed, 'This is strange; the food belongs to our father, yet servants prevent us from eating'.[2] Then the children's mother told them to go and snatch the razor from the barber who was ceremonially cutting their father's hair. Having done this, the sons began running towards their mother, followed closely by the Prince who enquired about the boys. The mother told him, 'These are your sons who were with their grandfather, the ghool, who brought them up and has now sent them back to see their father's wedding'. The Prince was overjoyed on the return of his sons, and went out to the gathering accompanied by his sons and cried aloud, 'O men, those of you who love the chosen Prophet can turn the wedding into a circumcision ceremony'.[3]

XIII

Once upon a time a childless woman prayed to God to give her a boy, even as small as a billy-goat's bob tail, and her prayers were answered. One day the bob tail (the little boy) hid himself in the grass, and was eaten by his father's cow. But one day, while the cow was about to turn the water wheel, the bob tail, who was now in her belly, said 'Hush', and thus stopped the cow from turning. The bob tail's brother told his father about the cow. But the latter did not believe him, and accused him of lying, and drowned him in the well. The father then asked his daughter to attend to the turning of the water wheel, but she also complained of the cow in the same way as her brother, and met the same fate by being drowned in the well. This time it was the father himself who attended to the water wheel, and realized that his children's complaint about the cow was true, and he decided to sell the cow to a butcher.

[1] In Arabic the phrases are 'Ya sabbar, sabbir kalbi, Ya henna, hannini al ghool 'alal'.
[2] The exclamation phrases in Arabic make a rhyme: 'al 'aish 'aish abouna, wal khadam yutruduna.'
[3] This also rhymes: 'Alli yihib annabi al mukhtar, yihlib azzwag tahar.'

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When the butcher had slaughtered the animal, he distributed it amongst the customers, one of whom, a woman, bought the tripe out of which came the bob tail. The woman was terrified of this emerging ghost and left the tripe, which the bob tail then took to his mother.

On another occasion the bob tail hid himself behind a tree, whilst a gang of thieves were distributing their booty, whereupon he appeared suddenly, frightening them away. He was thus left alone to collect the booty, which he took to his mother.[1]

XIV

There was a family of seven brothers and their sister, whose paternal cousins, a brother and a sister, lived in another house. The seven brothers were poor, while the cousin was rich, and out of envy the brothers wished to do away with their cousin, but later they changed their minds and decided to abandon him in the mountains. One night they carried him off to the mountains and tied him to the back of a tigress who was with young. Then they brought the girl cousin to their house with all the wealth that her brother possessed. After a short time the tigress gave birth to a cub, and passed frequently through the village on her way to the Nile roaring, 'Ay, ay, there is a son of Adam on my back; ay, ay, O sons of Adam, come and release him'. As this roaring was heard every time the tigress passed through the village, the brothers realized the danger in store for them by these threats of the tigress, who might attack them at any moment, and so decided to release their cousin. One night they went out to the mountains with their knives, cut their cousin from the tigress' back, and returned home with him.

The unfortunate man's sister found her brother in a deplorable state of health, as worms were coming out of his back, and the rest of his body was full of wounds. She therefore locked him in a room, and determined that she must make a great effort to restore his health. She used to slaughter a ram for him every day, and by doing so his health gradually improved. Feeling better, her brother asked her one day to fetch in a sword to take his revenge on his cousins, but she insisted that he was not yet fit for such a task as he could not lift on his back a sack full of sand. The sister went on feeding her brother on his daily ram, and a month later, he succeeded in carrying the sack, thus proving that he had completely regained his strength, and was let out of the room.

One day, a short time after his release from his confinement, the cousin attacked the seven brothers while they were eating and killed them all, but while he was about to slay their sister, his own sister intervened, and told him that she would be his future wife.

The cousins were married, but the wife could not forget what had happened to her brothers, and wanted to have revenge on her husband's

[1] Here one can also detect a pattern of an Oedipus story.

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sister. With this aim in view, she hid two sparrows' eggs in her sister-in-law's porridge, who after eating it, became pregnant, bringing forth two sparrows.

The two sparrows, intimidated by their mother, continually pestered their uncle's wife. Hostilities reached their climax when one day, while the latter was sieving the corn, the sparrows came to scatter it all over the ground. Every time she said 'Hish, hish', to drive them away, they answered back, 'Hish to you, may your face be removed'.[1]

The husband, on his wife's complaint, decided to get rid of the sister, who had to leave her brother's home and wander with her two sparrow sons. One day she found a palace, and under its shade she rested, while her sparrow sons went gathering food for her. On looking out of his palace, the Prince saw this beautiful woman, whom he let into the palace and decided to marry her. And by him she had two daughters.

One day, while her brother was hunting in the mountains, he came to this palace where his sister was living. On asking for hospitality from the palace the brother was recognized by the sister, but he did not know her until she told him who she was. She offered him food and showed him her daughters as well as her sparrow sons. He was deeply touched and decided to take his sister back home, and to get rid of his wife who was the cause of their separation. The brother confessed his guilt to his sister, and told her that after all it was she who had prevented him from killing the girl who was now his wife, along with her brothers. The brother and his sister returned and settled in their home, and lived happily ever after.

XV

Jiha was one night sleeping outside his house, and on waking in the morning he found that his bed blanket, in which he had tied his money, had been stolen.[2] Jiha was very upset and waited until winter to attempt to get back his cover. On a very cold night in the following winter he invited all the village people, old and young, to a ceremonial oath-meal, for which he slaughtered a bull.

People came along; everybody wrapping himself up in the thickest blanket he possessed. Jiha himself began distributing the meat, scanning each guest; if the guest were old, Jiha would say, 'Oh, you don't need meat, you have eaten enough meat in your life', and if the guest were young he would say, 'Oh, you don't need meat, you will have many other chances in your life to eat meat'. In this way he went round with the meat until he discovered the man who had stolen his blanket; this he seized, and then asked everybody to be off, saying, 'You may go away now, it's only Jiha himself who deserves his own beef'.

[1] In Arabic it is a rhyming phrase: 'Hish tihishak, wi tagla wishak.'

[2] Jiha is a symbol of an insignificant and ridiculous person. In the Cairo dialect he is referred to as 'Goha'.

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Jiha had a bull which he was fattening up to sell in the market. He took great pride in this, making great show of it in the village, boasting about the money he would get from the bull. Everyone asked Jiha to say, when he used to boast about his future wealth, that he would get it 'if God wills' (insha Allah). On each occasion Jiha replied: 'There is no need to add this phrase, because the bull is mine, and God has nothing to do with all this; I shall sell the bull and get the money, whether God wills it or not'.

On market day Jiha was eagerly looking forward to selling his bull and declared ostentatiously that from now on he would become a rich man. People again advised him to say 'if God wills', but he refused to comply. He sold his bull at last, putting his money in his pocket. A thief had been watching him, and deftly stole the money.

Jiha went off to buy some new clothes, swaggering and puffed up with conceit. When he put his hand in his pocket to pay the merchant he found that his money had gone. Then people came to ask Jiha about his money, and his reply was, 'If God wills, I have lost it'.

XVII

Jiha had a fat bull which did not allow anybody to enter the house without trying to toss him. Jiha's wife could not bear the bull's presence in the house, and repeatedly asked her husband to sell it. But Jiha insisted that he would not dispose of it unless green grass grew on the bull's back. One day Jiha's mother-in-law came into the house and the bull kicked her and broke her leg. The wife became more furious, and asked other people's advice concerning her husband's bull. An old woman advised her that instead of filling her water tin with water from the Nile, to fill it with earth and green grass from the field, and to put it on the bull's back. This she did, and the following morning she woke her husband telling him to get ready to sell the bull as the green grass had grown on the bull's back. Then Jiha asked his wife to heat him some water for his bath, and to prepare his tea before he went to the market in a nearby town.

Jiha took the bull to the market, but on his way he heard the voice of a man calling out, 'Oh, you, the owner of that billy-goat, come here'. Jiha pretended not to hear this remark and passed on. But the chief of the robbers (for such he was) ordered three of his gang to fetch Jiha and his bull. The three robbers went off and brought Jiha to the Chief who reprimanded him for not obeying his orders instantly. Jiha apologized, saying that he thought that the Chief's words were not directed to him as he had a bull and not a billy-goat. Anyhow, the thieves killed the bull, cutting it up into sixty pieces, and each one having a piece. Jiha entreated the robber chief to give him the tail of his bull as his share, which the Chief did. On his return home, Jiha told his wife about the thieves and how he managed to keep only the bull's tail. The wife set up a wailing,

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putting dust on her head, and taking the blame upon herself, because she had nagged him to sell the animal.

Jiha, however, was determined to revenge himself on the thieves, so one day he disguised himself in an old woman's dress, and repaired to the thieves' cave. It was night, and the thieves were just going out on their expedition, when they met this old woman whom they asked to come into their cave to entertain their father who was a very weak old man. Jiha was taken round the cave by the old man after the thieves had gone. He showed special interest in a type of garroting machine, and asked the old man how it worked. The latter began to demonstrate, and put his neck into the noose, whereupon Jiha lost no time in pulling the rope and half-strangling the old man, beating him meanwhile with the bull's tail, which was studded with nails. During the beating Jiha called out, 'I am not a woman as you see me, I am the owner of the bull'. After taking whatever he could lay his hand on, Jiha returned to his wife, and told her what he had done with the thieves' father.

On their return, the thieves found their father in a very poor way, and intended taking him to a medicine man. The next evening Jiha appeared in the disguise of a medicine man, declaring in front of the cave his unusual powers in treating all kinds of illnesses. He was taken into the cave to see the sick man. After consulting the stars and his beads, he told them that their sick father needed the milk of a deer which had only borne one offspring. As this was a rare animal, all the sons went out in various directions in search of the prescribed type of deer. When Jiha was sure that the thieves were a long way from the cave, he took out the bull's tail which was studded with nails, and started beating the old man again, saying to him, 'I am not a medicine man, I am the owner of the bull'. Then he asked him where the treasure was kept, and on being told he unlocked the door and helped himself to as much of the gold and silver he found there as he could carry.

On the following day Jiha asked one of his friends who was a fast runner, to go to the thieves' cave and announce that he was the owner of the bull. Jiha then followed his friend who, on announcing that he was the owner of the bull, ran away and was chased by all the sixty thieves. When Jiha, who was hiding, was sure that the thieves were well away, he entered the cave, gave the old father another beating with the bull's tail, and took away the rest of the thieves' wealth. As the thieves could not catch Jiha's friend whom they had pursued for a long distance, they returned home only to find their father dying, and their booty gone. Jiha went home to his wife, proud of the fact that although he had lost the bull, he had gained riches which were a hundred times more valuable.

XVIII

Jiha had a lame donkey which made him an object of ridicule throughout the whole village, but particularly from one of his neighbours. Jiha

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decided to retaliate by ridiculing his neighbour and making a fool of him. So one day, he inserted five pieces of gold into his lame donkey's rectum, and took it to drink from the canal. After the donkey had drunk the water it defaecated, dropping the gold pieces, which had been inserted.[1] Then those who were around were astonished, and every one of them wanted to buy Jiha's donkey which defaecated gold, but Jiha preferred to sell it to his neighbour. The next day, the neighbour discovered that Jiha had deceived him, for the donkey did not defaecate any gold. Jiha's answer to this accusation was that the donkey became sterile owing to some black magic.

Some time later Jiha agreed with his wife to pretend to beat her, so much so that she would fall to the ground, feigning death; whereupon he would blow a whistle which would bring her to life again. Then, on hearing about this, everybody in the village wanted to buy Jiha's whistle, but he sold it to his neighbour. One day the neighbour was angry with his wife and beat her so thoroughly that she died. He then tried to bring her to life by blowing Jiha's whistle, but nothing happened. Raging with fury, the neighbour decided to kill Jiha, and so revenge himself. Anticipating this, Jiha pretended to be dead and was buried in a grave, taking a sharp razor with him. But the neighbour decided to get down into the grave to make sure that Jiha was really dead. As he was entering the grave, Jiha pulled him down into it and cut him to pieces with his razor, and in this way, Jiha triumphed over them all.

[1] For a psycho-analytical interpretation of symbols, the connection here between defaecation (faeces) and gold is worth noting.

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Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age. 881 882

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay. 582 [585] [708]

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced. 882 183

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1] 883 183

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

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882 With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the [886] house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

883 Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

882 Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends.

885 581 Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for 888 [891] instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from 857 their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

882 [1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

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Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 882 183

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 183 831 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [834]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [882]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation. [841]

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- analyst]

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882 883 [834] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage 882 304 [302] by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her [301] ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

883 539 533 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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effect of social learning and to an intensified understanding of the social meaning of maturity. Looking at adolescence as a stage of social development and social experience, it does not differ markedly from the stages of childhood.[1] With the increase in the physical and mental capacities of the growing boy or girl, he or she is expected to have fully mastered the skills and faithfully observed the social norms and attitudes which he or she has hitherto been imbibing and practising. What Fortes observed in the process of socialization in Taleland applies almost equally to this peasant community where the total pattern of behaviour is not built up bit by bit, through addition, but evolves from the embryonic form in an almost concentric pattern of development.[2] In this way the norms of development are increasingly reinforced and intensified through institutional and social learning. Moreover, with the comparatively slow pace of change, the adolescent develops a sense of cultural assurance since he sees others going through experiences culturally similar to his own.[3]

At this juncture it is appropriate to mention that in some communities characterized by continuity of social training combined with lax and even social disciplines, the period of adolescence does not witness emotional stress and turmoil which hitherto have been considered as inevitable characteristics of this phase of development.[4] Moreover, recent investigations among adolescents in Western communities have shown that such symptoms of stress and ferment are absent amongst boys and girls who have been reared in favourable conditions; and the conclusion is that appearance of such traits is neither an inevitable accompaniment of the adolescent stage nor an inescapable consequence of the maturing of certain animal-like instincts.[5]

Some psychologists and especially Freudian analysts maintain that the biological changes in adolescence have a great impact on the individual's behaviour.[6] This is one extreme, while the other is to consider adolescence as purely a sociological phenomenon and merely a social experience involving new adjustments to social situations and relationships. Here adolescence is to be considered as a bio-social phenomenon, dependent on the cultural conditioning of the individual with regard to his maturing sex

[1] M. Mead, 'Coming of Age in Samoa'; Reuter, Foster and Mead, 'Sociological Research in Adolescence', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLII, 1936, 1937, pp. 81–94.

[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, pp. 42–3.

[3] M. Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory' in *Social Structure—Essays Presented to Radcliffe Brown*, p. 22.

[4] M. Fortes, op. cit., — M. Mead, 'Adolescence in Primitive and Modern Societies', in *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. by T. M. Newcombe and E. L. Hartley, New York, 1947.

[5] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, London, 1949, pp. 240–2.

[6] Wayne Dennis, 'The Adolescent', in Carmichael, *Manual of Child Psychology*, pp. 636–7. He maintains that adolescence originally had a meaning which was biological, and not temporal or social. Hence studies concerning the psychology of adolescence must concern themselves with the effects of the biological process on the behaviour of the individual and their main aim therefore is an examination of a certain set of mental-physical correlations.

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882 functions and the impact of this standardization on the basic personality structure and social institutions.[1] In the light of this statement, the social disciplines connected with sexuality are relevant data, and according to Kardiner, of great significance in understanding the basic personality structure and in explaining partly the nature of primary institutions.

It seems that in Silwa the process of socialization is similar in many points to that amongst the Tallensi and the Samoans, with regard to the continuity of the inculcated social norms and the spheres of adult and child activities.[2] Unlike many Western societies, youth in Silwa do not express in their attitudes that sense of being torn between youthful autonomy and parental insistence on dependence. This problem does not seem to be disturbing to parents and would seem abhorrent to youth who like to demonstrate their allegiance to their family and clan. Even if such desire for autonomy is occasionally expressed by boys, who on disagreement with their parents desert them for some relatives in another village or go to town to work, this is considered to be the exception, and of course such a desertion can never be entertained by girls. The lack of such strong desire could be explained by the security the youth derives from his status in his family and his need to be married by his parents.

Psychologically, however, adolescent boys, and more so adolescent [157] girls, impressed the writer as being on the whole timid, apprehensive and withdrawn. These traits stand out more clearly if compared with children's groups. Attitudes of initiative, self-assertion and drive seem to be the exception in adolescent behaviour.[3] In attempting to account for such general characteristics, the writer does not claim them to be the negative phase of the adolescent stage. He attributes their striking appearance to the cumulative effect of the severe social disciplines, and especially those connected with sex. The maturing of sex functions at this stage is noted [831] with great embarrassment, shame and feeling of guilt by adolescents. As mentioned before, complete hush and excessive secrecy prevails over sexual matters among adolescents as well as adults. This seems to contrast sharply with free bodily gratification given to the infants. There is no word for masturbation in the villagers' dialect. Sexual pleasure of any kind outside the marriage tie is condemned by the text of the Koran, as mentioned earlier.

[834] Manifestations of this excessive repression and fear of sex are obvious in the veiling of adolescent girls and women and the hiding of the breast

[1] Richard T. Sollinberger, 'The Concept of Adolescence', in *The Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 36, 1939, pp. 600–1. A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*.

[2] For adolescence and puberty as treated in different societies, see also Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Chapter II.

[3] This is the writer's general impression and could only be substantiated by comprehensive recording of the behaviour of adolescents. According to Fortes, however, 'for most problems of social anthropology, variations are of minor importance as compared with the "typical". For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance.' *Patterns of Culture*, p. 8.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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155 guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition
152 to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes [674] of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social [184] equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connec-
577 tion between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this [837] community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the [848] last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual [838] pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and [839] young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

887 Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems con-
885 nected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in
585 the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

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witnessed, and which is typical as there is hardly any variation in the form it takes. 585

A is a boy who had recently been rejected for military conscription, on grounds of poor eyesight; he is known to be a good farmer, and a great help to his father. He was the eldest son in the family and felt that his father delayed his marriage unduly as 'fathers usually get their first sons married as early as possible'. After he was rejected for conscription, this boy could no longer bear any delay. As the custom is, he sent 'messengers' to persuade his father to get him married, as 'everybody was telling him that it was high time he got married'. On the other hand, his father was reluctant; he was in a quandary whether or not to proceed with this project; he was apprehensive that the lad might not be so devoted to his work after marriage, yet he felt the time was ripe for getting his son married, otherwise the boy might at any time 'bring disgrace' on the family. The lad's last appeal to the father was through a messenger who pointed out to the father that if the necessary steps for marriage were not instantly undertaken, the boy might think of leaving the village to find some work elsewhere. The father gave his consent, realizing that he would have to get his son married: 'There will be more "baraka" if it is done soon.'[1] The actual preparations would start in a month's time, when the harvest was ready. 582 [702]

Now a dilemma of choice faced the parents, as there were two girls of marriageable age in the family; one was the daughter of the boy's maternal uncle and the other of the paternal uncle. It was partly because of the mother's influence, and partly because of the boy's personal inclinations that his parents decided to marry him to his maternal cousin. This affronted the boy's paternal uncle, as his daughter, according to custom, had precedence over that of the maternal uncle. This man asked the lad's father for an 'Arab verdict' on the matter, and a formal gathering of relatives and some neighbours brought apparent reconciliation between the two brothers. They all agreed that 'although the boy was to get married into his mother's family the oil was still preserved in the house (zaitakum fi baitakum) and that he was not marrying a stranger'. Yet this slight was not forgotten and caused some tension and vituperation between some of the paternal and maternal relatives during the celebration of the ceremony. [584] [578]

The date of writing the marriage contract was then fixed. The father of the boy and his relatives and friends went to the house of the girl's father asking for her hand for their son in the usual phrase of 'talbeen al gurb' (literally 'we desire to get closer to you'). Neither the boy nor the girl was present during this gathering for writing the contract. Before the contract was written, the registrar (maazoon)[2] enunciated the following, which was 584

[1] This remark of the father indicated his social obligation for the marriage of his son; its counterpart is for the son to accept his father's arrangement for his marriage.

[2] The 'maazoon' is a learned man who keeps the official register of marriage and divorce. He is officially appointed after an examination in the Koran and the Sharia; it is an unpaid job. [629]

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584 repeated by the girl's father: 'I have married my daughter X to Y accepting the payment on which the people of the two sides concerned have agreed in the manner prescribed by the Holy Book and the Way of the Prophet.' The contract was then signed by the two fathers as well as another witness for each side.[1] This was followed by the reading of the 'Fatiha' and [583] the giving of the marriage-payment (mahr) to the bride's father. In this case the amount was ten pounds paid in advance and two pounds to be paid later. According to the village practice, the payment always consists of two parts; the greater part (usually three-quarters of the total) is paid over after writing the contract and is called 'mugaddam' (in advance), [586] while the other, called 'muakhar' (the delayed), is only payable in case of divorce. All these procedures in the ceremony described here were followed, as usual, by a specially prepared meal ending with the reading of the 'Fatiha' and a prayer to God that He might help in making this marriage successful and fruitful. While all this was taking place, the girl's mother and her female relatives, but not the boy's mother or his female relatives, were singing and uttering their joy-cries now and again. The 'maazoon' then left with his money gift from the bridegroom's father and sugar and corn from the bride's family. Thus the ceremony of 'agreement' (tibah) ended.

The agreement between the two families was followed by their fixing [585] the 'night of marriage' (lailat addukhla), and this followed a fortnight later.[2] In the meanwhile, the bridegroom took his weekly presents to the [431] girl's house on the market day. These presents usually consist of meat, sweets, fruit and similar delicacies. The girl's mother returned the handkerchief on the basket in which these gifts were sent with presents of pigeons and flour. During his visits in this period, the boy, as expected, was not allowed to see the girl, being usually met by the mother and father. During this period also the girl's family were preparing her house and [342] decorating it. They had to build an extra room, and thus the newly-weds' apartment consisted of two rooms, one with a completely covered roof with only two small holes as windows, while the front room was half-covered. This is a typical way of building a house in Silwa, making the inner room for use in winter and the outer for summer. At the same time, the girl's family were getting together her jewellery, by buying bits and borrowing others.

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl composed of two black

[1] According to Islamic Law there must be two witnesses for each side to sanction the marriage. It must be noted here that the writing of the contract at this stage is not like an engagement; it is religiously binding as if actual marriage had taken place. If the bride or the bridegroom happens to die immediately after the contract, the surviving partner is entitled to have a share in any property.

[2] It literally means 'the night on which the bridegroom enters in unto the bride'. It must also be noted here that Moslems regard marriage as essentially a civil contract, the validity of which depends only on the agreement of both sides. See Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, London, 1914.

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The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl [composed of two hibaas] 584 outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [491] with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in 585 the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their 431 contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. 585 Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515] On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
How we are admiring her.
The snake in his hole
has spent a sleepless night.
He kept one eye on her forehead,
and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 — 4 = 9/YST]

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585 Behind this small gathering of men and a great crowd of children, followed the female procession crying out shrills and singing.

After the evening prayer the bridegroom offered a meal to those who [431] were in the procession, as well as others who were invited, after which contributions from men began to be received in the 'haircutting' ceremony. The details of announcement of contributions are exactly the same as those described earlier for the circumcision ceremony.[2] While the bride-[300] groom or 'The Prince', as he is usually called on such an occasion, was having his hair cut, the circle of 'the boys of romance'[2] was in full swing outside the house; other adolescent boys were engaged in mock fighting with their staves.

As the contribution ceremony ended, the crowd of boys stopped their organized playing and singing and showed signs of excitement and anticipation for the next event, when the bridegroom in his best clothes, a dagger tied to his waist and a stick in hand, had to go to meet the bride. Immediately the bridegroom came out of the house, another procession was organized. The procession was led by a strong youth taking a camel-load of wheat, corn, lentils and beans which was to be the bridegroom's provisions for three months. The bridegroom himself was amidst a group of his friends, who were reciting the traditional song of: 'O God, Praise our Prophet; our hearts love him because he will save us from Hell.' At the very rear came the procession of women, and the whole procession moved towards the bride's house.

As the singing and beating of the drums were heard by the bride's people, they came out with her, face and body covered, and in the care of her mother and the midwife, with another girl walking beside them carrying candles and corn on a tray on her head. Other women and girls were following in a state of great excitement. When the two processions met, the midwife took the bride to the bridegroom. On her face being uncovered to see him, he was prepared to sprinkle her face with some milk which he had in his mouth and would expel with force.[1] At this moment the excitement reached its peak as the boys around the bridegroom sang at the top of their voices, 'The roses are blossoming. She is rightfully thine, she is rightfully thine.'[2]

The tension between the bridegroom's maternal and paternal relations [578] reached its highest a short time later when the traditional mock fight began over the loaded camel. This fight usually takes place just in front of the bride's house, where some boys belonging to the bridegroom's family try to take the camel back to where it came from, while other boys from the bride's family try to prevent them from doing so and lead the camel to

[1] It is by no means the first time the bride and bridegroom saw each other, which might be inferred from such a ritual.

[2] It is one of the signs of a 'good man' not to show any signs of embarrassment, and to be able to aim the milk right at the bride's face, otherwise he would be chaffed about it. [578] On this occasion, although the bridegroom did this job properly, he was not spared some criticism especially from those who were in favour of a marriage with his paternal cousin.

[See Category 116, P. 117 -- analyst]
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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night. 585 [578]

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn. [262] [574]

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged. [431] [591]

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations. [431] 585

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever 606

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

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585 606 might have been the relations between him and them before marriage, the newly created situation makes him no longer on familiar social terms with them. Traditionally, to remove this 'avoidance' the bridegroom's family should send within the first two months of marriage a ram to the bride's family as a 'reconciliation'.[1]

This avoidance could be regarded as a recognition that, in the initial stages of marriage, much of the behaviour of the married man to the family of his spouse has to be modified and reoriented. Even if he is married to his cousin, avoidance of her parents is required as a token of respect. Adoption of new phrases in reference to his in-laws, house habits of reserve, announcing his entrance into the house, manner of dress and similar items of etiquette must be observed by the newly married groom. In other words, previous informality and intimacy are replaced by a degree of formality to show consideration for the new ties of marriage.

This avoidance could also be considered as a manifestation that the [591] husband, living in his matrilocal residence, feels uneasy and embarrassed in the home of a comparatively alien family; his ultimate home will be his patrilineal house to which he eventually takes his wife.[2] This custom also implies the psychological stresses involved in the new situation, where it is difficult to render the demands of consanguinity and affinity compatible, and where the support of the larger family unit has to be sustained for the maintenance of the newly created bonds of the individual family.[3]

Nadel explains such an avoidance in a similar manner. He maintains that in such a situation spontaneous shame and conventionalized sexual shame appear combined; for these cultural features express (and prevent) both the embarrassment between strangers (in a kinship sense) who are thrown together by marriage, and the embarrassment that springs from the awareness of the sexual occasion responsible for this new relationship.[4]

Such social procedures are implicit cultural solutions for smoothing transition from one state of life to another requiring concomitant adjustment and reorganization.

[1] Although avoidance between bridegroom and parents-in-law is still strictly observed, [198] the breaking away from it does not necessarily have to be achieved through a gift of a 'slaughter', but occurs quite often nowadays through the exigencies of everyday life after the lapse of some time.

[2] This is the ideal course to be taken, but, as mentioned earlier, other factors, e.g. lack of space in his father's house, the bride's parents' attachment to their daughter and her children, might keep the husband in his matrilocal residence for years.

[3] This explanation is based on a similar situation referred to by R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 343. This avoidance lends itself to psycho-analytical interpretation in terms of incestuous taboo. The uneasiness in the newly created situation could also be inferred from the 'mock fight' which could be classified, according to Van Gennep, as one of the 'rites de separation', while exchange of gifts and the partaking of food would fall in the category of 'rites d'agrégation'. Cf. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, p. 198.

[4] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 352. The psycho-analytical interpretation for such a taboo, according to Roheim, is that in this way an attempt is made to separate the wife from the mother, genitality from orality, and infantile dependency. *Psycho-analysis and Anthropology*, p. 425.

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In Artas, the Palestinian village studied by Granqvist, the uneasiness in this stage of adjustment presents itself in a different way. As marriage in Artas is in the patrilocal residence, the bride, before leaving her family, would make demands on the bridegroom's family and make sure that her family's wishes have been fulfilled, before she is placed on the camel going to her bridegroom's house.[1] 171

As for the bride, she now starts her seclusion in the house till she brings forth a child and is never allowed to go out and never seen by a married man, even her husband's father and her married brothers. Her main job is to attend to her husband, to receive him when he knocks at the door, and to serve food to him. One of the main difficulties of newly married girls is their adjustment to the new situation, where they must break away from their previous life and assume a responsible role. The difficulties, however, are smoothed out in the matrilocal marriage period, where the bride's mother is really the one who, behind the scenes, provides her son-in-law with his requirements. This attention of the mother to her son-in-law usually makes her unmarried sons and daughters jealous, as epitomized in the common saying referred to earlier. Under her mother's supervision and instructions, the bride comes to learn the appropriate conduct of womanhood. It is probably during this period that she receives sex information as the occasion arises. Moreover, her previous playmates do not sever their contacts with her; they still go to see her and 'have a hand dip of henna' with her; but she is not allowed to join their games or play with 'toys'. Other women, especially relatives, come to see her, give her advice and praise her 'halo' and jewellery. On the whole it seems that the girl comes under her mother's authority at this stage more than any other stage of her development. During this period of seclusion the direct influence of the mother is undoubtedly supreme, even much more than the husband. The latter, in fact, is not expected to linger in his bride's house. Except for his mealtimes, he should not remain in the house except when he comes in late at night after finishing his entertainments with his friends. 585 593 [606]

Indeed, the first year of marriage, for both the husband and wife, bristles with difficulties that may lead to divorce. According to my informant, Mahmoud, marriages are more prone to break down during the first year than at any later period. This statement seems plausible, since during the first year especially, the economic, social and psychological adjustments or maladjustments not only between the spouses, but also between their families, develop.[2] The amount of talk, gossip and vitupera- 586 593

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. II, Helsingfors, 1935, p. 72.

[2] For a well-documented discussion on the economic, social and psychological factors curbing the Moslem's nominal freedom of divorce, see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. According to official statistics the ratio of divorce per thousand of the population of Egypt for the five years between 1942 and 1946 was 8·3, 9·2, 9·6, 8·9, 8·1 respectively. *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 47 (in Arabic).

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586 tion, especially amongst the womenfolk, might appear tragi-comic when
593 they harp endlessly upon the shortcomings of the spouses, and their respective families. Complaints and gossip are heard about things such as the inability to provide the right amount of henna for the bride; or the bride's family's bad cooking of the groom's pigeons; the quality of the girl's jewellery and endless small things which reveal the difficulties of the adjustments of the individual family to an equally important wider circle of the joint family.

586 The following table shows that the percentages of divorce for the whole country reach their highest during the first two years of marriage.

TABLE IV

Relation between divorce and the duration of marriage between 1942 and 1946 in Egypt

Duration of marriage	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
Less than a month	4·20	4·31	4·46	3·88	3·99
One–six months	14·60	15·70	16·30	14·50	14·20
Six months–one year	12·50	13·10	14·40	14·60	13·05
One–two years	18·4	18·10	20·90	20·30	20·30
Two–three years	11·0	11·90	13·60	14·50	13·70
Three–four years	7·55	9·05	8·34	7·82	8·60
Four–five years	5·80	4·87	5·04	5·53	5·40
Five–ten years	15·30	13·10	13·70	12·30	11·90
Ten–fifteen years	5·42	5·23	5·10	4·63	4·74
Fifteen–twenty years	2·42	2·40	2·32	2·12	2·00
Twenty years and more	2·78	2·66	2·38	2·09	2·12[1]

Here a short note on divorce seems necessary. The right and power to divorce one's wife is part of the male ethos in this community. According to Moslem law (Sharia) a man can divorce his wife twice and on both occasions can take her back. If he repeats any formula of divorce three times or says, 'You are divorced threefold' (talga bi attalati), then the divorce is final; and husband and wife can only remarry on certain conditions.[2] Recently, in Egypt, the threefold formula of divorce has come to be regarded as one statement, and husband and wife can reunite immediately after its utterance if they wish.

The word 'divorce' is also used as a conditional oath by men to convince others of the truth of a statement, or to force them to accept an offer or conform to a desire.[3]

[1] These percentages are worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 50 (in Arabic). [2] Cf. S. G. Fitzgerald, *Mohammedan Law*.
[3] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, pp. 257–8.

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The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

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Chapter Ten

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

121 It has been pointed out by some anthropologists that in homogeneous primitive societies, the attention is focused more on the desirability of learning over against the desirability of teaching.[1] As the cultural alternatives are so limited in such communities, the individual finds himself learning the accepted skills, habits and attitudes which everyone else agrees that he would wish to learn. The desirability of learning the socially acceptable modes of living is contrasted, on the whole, with modern societies where individuals are taught various things on which there is no consensus of agreement that everyone has a desire to know. This distinction between folk and modern societies reflected in the different methods of learning and teaching is, of course, not an absolute distinction. For instance, in folk communities teaching does take place, e.g. in certain ceremonies, in the constant corrections and admonitions to children, and so on; and learning does take place in modern societies in the family and group situations.

876 In folk communities in general, the educative process, whether through learning or teaching, is coterminous with life, and none of its situations is deliberately singled out or isolated for drill or special training.[2] In Silwa the popular saying tends to confirm that the desire to learn is preferable to the need of being taught: 'If the boy does not learn, time will teach him the hard way.' This is also in line with the traditions of Moslem society, where people have been expected to seek knowledge as 'knowledge does not seek people'. Whether in search of special skills or religious enlightenment, the master did not go seeking pupils, but rather the converse. In the Arabic language the word for pupil or student (talib) literally means 'the searcher', he who requests and requires knowledge.

It should also be pointed out here that folk life in Silwa has been relatively independent of the influence of the written word, and it has been affected by it only through a small number of people who were considered

[1] Margaret Mead, 'Our Educational Emphases in Primitive Perspective', in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 634.
[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 27.

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64-6.

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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

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The writer is however aware that his surmise concerning the stimulation 153
of memory in the village's culture is neither fully documented nor based on experimental data as was that of Nadel's experiments to ascertain the differences in cognitive processes between the school children of the two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe.[1]

Moreover, the writer cannot comment on the effect of such a cultiva- 156
tion of the habits of rote memory on the individual's character structure. That there is a relationship between the method of learning and the individual's attitude towards himself, and his interpretations of experience, is claimed by Bateson and Mead. They maintain that if the individual is brought up in habits of rote memory 'his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight'.[2]

It can also be shown than the interests and imagination of children are 159
tied down to concrete things and events such as food, animals, ceremonies, farm work, and so forth. It was found that the majority of their responses to story completion, free drawings and in Rorschach testing were highly impregnated with concrete realism.[3] One cannot fail to notice that both

[1] Nadel, from his experiments with story recounting and responses to pictures on some children of those two tribes, concluded that a people possessing a highly developed realistic art and drama, and a rich, complicated, and rationalized religious system, is characterized in the field of psychological reaction by stress on rational elements, logical cohesion, and strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach as to what is presented to them. On the other hand, a people whose culture lacks such art and drama and whose religious beliefs are centred round abstract and impersonal principles, are psychologically different in the sense that they are more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, stressing unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts and meaning and rational consistency. 'A Field Experiment in Racial Psychology', in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXVIII, 1937–8, pp. 195–211.

R. H. Thouless, experimenting on the perception of twenty Indian students and a group of British students, concludes that the former group showed a significantly greater tendency towards 'phenomenal regression' to the real object than the latter group. For instance, in the case of the Indian students there was greater tendency for circular objects inclined to the observer to be drawn as wide ellipses, for parallel-sided objects with the sides receding from the observer to be represented as parallel, and for objects of the same real size at different distances to be drawn with very little difference in size. 'A Racial Difference in Perception', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 330–9.

[2] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *The Balinese Character*, p. 84.

[3] For typical examples of story completion and Rorschach responses, see appendices.

As to free drawings, the writer has on two occasions asked pupils in the compulsory school to draw whatever they wanted to, and the following is a list of the subjects drawn: oranges, girls carrying baskets on their heads, a boy tending sheep, a car and a palm tree, a boy riding a donkey and a car behind him, a girl feeding a chicken, fish, a car with people gathered around it, palm tree and water, two boys racing on donkey back, ducks, a house, a trader selling sugar to a girl, lemons, bananas and oranges, a man cutting sugar-cane, a boy climbing a palm tree, a girl beating a tambourine, a ceremonial procession near the mosque, a farewell procession for a pilgrim.

When I asked some of the children about their drawings, none of them told me of any plot in the drawing. They were purely representative of things and concrete events. The [532]
children's drawings were characterized by the almost entire absence of 'landscape' in

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One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Muktadimat*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

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learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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872 794 more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

[539] [782]

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field. [576]

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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran.

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab.

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at

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793 'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the prefix of 'Sheikh'.

871 794 [876] In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves [739] in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in The Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it.

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); Az-Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta'allum* (translated by G. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

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the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it. It will be shown in the next chapter how the role of the Kuttab has been seriously challenged by the modern system of schools.

In addition to the Kuttab, the village mystic order of Nakshabandia must be considered as an organized educational institution for adolescents and young men, where they enjoy comradeship of 'The Path' and learn religious and mystic practices, stories and verses.[1]

[1] See Chapter IX.

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Chapter Eleven

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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After reviewing the indigenous aims and methods of learning and teaching, we turn now to the modern system of schooling which has affected the village as a result of the national educational policy. This type of schooling is represented in the two schools of the village, the compulsory and the primary school.

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The compulsory school was established by the Provincial Council in 1925. In discussing the village compulsory school one must inevitably touch on educational problems at the national level. Compulsory schools were established to meet the long-felt need for mass literacy. The 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls. Accordingly the Ministry of Education planned to put this article into effect. The Ministry's scheme rejected the Kuttab as completely inadequate to cope with the problems of illiteracy, and of no educational value. Hence, new schools, called 'compulsory schools', had to be established. The period of compulsory education was to be for five years (from seven to twelve years old) on a half-day basis. The object of this programme was to benefit the maximum number of boys and girls. The time limit for completing the programme of compulsory education by providing a place for every child and thus abolishing illiteracy was fixed as fifteen years, and was extended later to twenty years.[1] The scheme was based on the participation of the Provincial Councils with the Ministry of Education, the former to be responsible for the sites, buildings, furniture and equipment; the latter for the staffing and administration. In 1933, owing to the difficulties entailed in the previous programme, a new education bill was passed to enforce attendance between the ages of seven and twelve, thus reducing the period to five years instead of six, and still on the half-day basis. Only those who suffer from physical or mental diseases, or those who live more than two kilometres from the nearest school, are exempt. The law also stipulates that the child's parents or guardians are responsible for his education in a compulsory school, if he is not receiving education else-

[1] Al-Kabbani, *Siasat al-T'alim fi Misr*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 9–10 (Arabic).

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where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of schoolchildren during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

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875 the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

872 Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers [156] from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since [264] the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[265] [2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

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However, many of the benefits of compulsory education have been vitiated by the policy of cheap education for the poor. The theory and practice of compulsory education makes this quite obvious. Theoretically, the main purpose has been to train the child in the three R's, and to enable him to understand and to appreciate those principles of social life compatible with his own position, and to lead a good and contented life.[1] In practice, the mark of poverty is even more obvious, comparing the building equipment and teachers' salaries of compulsory schools with those of primary and secondary schools. Up to 1948, the latest year for which statistics are available, the appropriations for compulsory elementary education never exceeded 30 per cent of the total expenditure on other types of schools, while it amounted to almost 70 per cent in other countries such as France, the Netherlands, Ireland and England, bearing in mind, of course, that most of these countries had finished a long time ago with the initial expenses on building and equipment.[2] On the other hand, about 10 per cent of the educational expenditure in Egypt in 1936 was devoted to higher education at the University level, while the expenditure in the European countries previously mentioned amounted in the same year to 4 per cent and 6 per cent at the same level. The year 1936 is not an unusual one, as it represents the proportion of educational expenditure which is one of the main reasons for the top-heaviness of the Egyptian educational system, or as it is usually branded, 'the inverted pyramid'.[3]

Thus to throw the blame of the failure of the compulsory school on to the apathy of the fellah is to make a confusion of issues and an easy way out for those who do not think that education is a commodity to be sold, and that such a commodity must be desirable, useful, or appealing in some ways to the customer. Up to 1948 the compulsory elementary school was a separate world in two respects: separate from the real life of the rural population, and separate from the other types of schools which command

Item of food	*Quantity*
Bread	120 grammes
White cheese	10 ,,
Tomatoes	60 ,,
Nuts (fool soudani) ..	30 ,,
Salt	1 ,,
Cooked beans (fool midamis)	80 ,,
Oil (No. 1)	10 ,,
Dried dates	60 ,,
Boiled eggs	1

[1] *Year Book of Education*, 1939, article by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education on 'Education in Egypt', p. 746.

[2] See *Annuaire Internationale de l'Education et de l'Enseignement*, 1939. The writer is aware of the difficulties involved in such a comparison, but the differences are so striking that they are certainly significant.

[3] See the writer's M.A. thesis on 'An Enquiry into Inequalities of Educational Opportunities in Egypt' (London University, 1949, unpublished).

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872 such a high prestige as they lead to the coveted government posts. In fact, a child leaving the compulsory school at the age of twelve cannot proceed to a secondary school education, except through the primary school, which he is now too old to enter. It must be pointed out here that the primary school leading to secondary and higher education has been a different type of school from the elementary school. In this way, the elementary school population has been debarred from any further educational facilities, except the elementary Teacher Training Schools and al-Azhar. This handicap of the compulsory school has stimulated the idea of unifying the first stage of education for all children of six to twelve years of age, as is the case in other democratic countries. The Elementary [658] Education Act, passed by the Parliament in 1948, was the crowning effort of the previous attempt to bring the primary and elementary schools together. In theory, at least, the curriculum and the equipment at the elementary school are to be brought up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the primary school. In addition to that, the half-day system is to be abolished, and the elementary course is to extend to six years on a full-day basis from six to twelve.[1]

The compulsory school in Silwa has not felt the impact of the new changes except in the name, being called the converted primary school: it has remained the same both in building, equipment and content of education, as well as the period of schooling from seven to twelve, and no children have been transferred from the primary school, as they have never reached the standards required.

Unattracted by the compulsory school, the villagers have been clamouring for a primary school, the desire for which has been motivated by practical purposes. In spite of the Elementary Education Act of 1948, the primary school is, in the villagers' view, the only way leading to government jobs, and thus for wealth and prestige. It happened that during the early days of my stay in the village (December 1950), the Minister of Education in Egypt appealed to the rich to contribute liberally in money or in premises for educational purposes. On this occasion the member of the Upper House for Silwa was persuaded by the villagers to build the school and offer it to the Minister. The site was chosen, and the building was just beginning when the writer left the village in April 1951. The new primary school has actually been functioning since October of the same year. The school takes children from the age of seven to twelve on the basis of an entrance examination in reading, writing, arithmetic and

[1] *Ministry of Education Report*, 1947–8, pp. 3–4 (in Arabic), Government Press, Cairo, 1948. New laws have been recently enacted (May–June 1953) for the reorganization of the educational system in Egypt. The struggle for the unified school is being won. The system is divided into three stages: 1. primary (6–10); 2. preparatory (10–12); 3. secondary (12–16). Curricula for the various stages are under review for their adaptation to the needs of the learners.

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drawing. In towns where there are kindergartens, children who completed the three years of the kindergarten are admitted without any examination. While the elementary school has always been free, the primary school only became free since 1943. The enthusiasm for the primary school in contrast to the blind alley of the elementary school, is that it leads to secondary schools and higher education. 872

In 1948 an Education Act was passed for the unification of the elementary and primary school to provide a common school for all. The ideal implied in the Act is to bring the curriculum and equipment of the elementary school up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the latter, while the former would give more instruction in Arabic and religion. Both schools would thus lead to secondary education.

The purpose of the modern system of education, primary, secondary and higher education, as envisaged by Muhammad Ali during the first half of the nineteenth century, was to train civil servants. The national policy of education, and consequently the people themselves, has connected this type of education with government service. From that point of view, the more children who attended the school the better, thereby providing wider scope of selection of employees for the government administration. The more children went to such schools, the less they received in return. As supply overtook demand, competition forced up the requirements for government jobs and lowered the economic value of certificates and degrees. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, a primary school certificate was sufficient qualification for a government job; later candidates for the same job were obliged to produce a secondary school certificate, and later even university graduates failed to find remunerative work. 871

In spite of all this, the appeal of such schools and institutions leading, not to the 'white collar' jobs in general as in the West, but particularly to government posts, cannot be exaggerated. Mann's observation in this respect still holds: 'In no other country in the world perhaps do the professional classes and especially the civil servants enjoy such widespread prestige and admiration. Hence inevitably the enthusiasm of Egyptian parents flows irresistibly into the channels of superior education, secondary or higher. The result is that there is a continual over-pressure on the accommodation of primary and secondary schools and the higher colleges, and public opinion persistently demands a further expansion of facilities at a time when the gravest doubts have arisen in the minds of the competent authorities whether a supply of professionally trained men is not being annually produced far larger than the country can ever hope to absorb.'[1] [554]

This research had been conducted before the establishment of the primary school in Silwa, and thus may serve as a base line for the effect of such an education on the village life. From information received, the 872

[1] F. O. Mann, 'Education in Egypt', *Year Book of Education*, 1932, p. 991.

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872 villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

[MM] [29] A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is 212 necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·[illegible]	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

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is estimated that the total percentage of literacy for this year is about 25 per cent.[1] 212

It is worth noting here that there is no definite standard or critique for determining literacy in the official census in Egypt. Officials who conduct the census may consider a person literate if he or she can read a sentence in print. They might decide to include a person as literate on hearsay. Even if they take writing as one of the requirements for literacy, it is difficult to know exactly what criterion they adopt, and what type of writing or speed they require. A person is sometimes considered literate if he can sign his name.[2]

There is certainly a great improvement in the whole country since 1907 with regard to the percentage of literacy, especially in the age group between ten and nineteen. The following percentages show the state of literacy in different age ranges.

TABLE VIII

Literacy in different age ranges

Age	*1907* %	*Age*	*1917* %
0–9	1·2	0–9	3·2
10–14	7·7	10–19	10·2
15–19	8·4	20–29	9·6
20 and over	7·0	30–39	8·5
		40–49	8·7
		50–59	8·1
		60 and over	4·6

Age	*1927* %	*1937* %
5–9	11·8	38·6
10–14	18·2	21·8
15–19	14·9	16·7
20–29	14·8	14·7
30–39	13·7	13·4
40–49	13·2	13·0
50–59	8·3	7·6
60 and over not stated	10·0	18·9[3]

[1] Ministry of Social Affairs, *In the Service of the Egyptian Village*, pamphlet 2 (Arabic), Government Press, Cairo, 1951.

[2] It is considered that literacy requirement must include the ability to translate the signs not only into sounds, but also into meanings. It is suggested that a good test for writing ability is to dictate one hundred words from a basic word list asking the person to write them down. Unesco, *Fundamental Education*, Paris, 1947, p. 24.

[3] Worked out according to the 1907 Census, p. 142; 1917 Census, p. 565; 1927 Census, p. 563; 1937 Census, pp. 210–12.

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212 This improvement is also obvious in Silwa itself: ten years ago there were two public scribes in the village to whom people would resort for letter-writing or making formal complaints, but they have had to close their establishment on not finding enough customers. The spread of literacy in Egypt has generally been made more difficult because of the difference between the colloquial and the classical Arabic, which is taught [197] in schools. The relation of the former to the latter is almost like that of Swiss German to High German. Moreover, some reformers maintain that it takes too long with the present script for the child to become sufficiently literate, and this difficulty has prompted some Egyptian scholars to advocate a Latin script instead of the present Arab script.[1] The numerous rules of inflection, changing vowels and consonants, and the diacritical marks attached to the words according to meaning, make correct reading a tiresome task. It has often been said, and not without some measure of justification, that in European languages, one has to read in order to understand, while in Arabic, one has to understand in order to read.

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871 In Silwa, however, though people are increasingly attaching more importance to the ability to read and write, this instrument cannot be considered as a vital motivating force in their lives. The villagers' traditions can be mainly communicated orally, with a few literate persons on whom would devolve the responsibility of communicating the cultural and religious aspects requiring literacy. It is not surprising, then, that some of the villagers, especially most women, who had learnt reading and writing at a compulsory school, have almost relapsed into illiteracy. The remoteness and relative isolation of the village, along with the poverty in cultural influences such as newspapers, books, and other suitable reading [604] material, explain to a great extent this phenomenon. The degree of literacy could be better assessed, however, from the kind of literature that is read in the village, and from the extent to which the reading ability is utilized. There are hardly any books in the village, except those few related to religious matters in one way or another. The following is a list of all the books which are acquired and read by the villagers:

Books on Jurisprudence (fikh): *Matn Assafti, al-Ishmawi, Sharh abu-al Hasan, matn Addardiri, Risalat Ibn abi-Zaid al-Kairuwani, Azzurkani.*

Burdat-al-Busiri (The Mantle Ode), a hymn in praise of the Prophet.

Dalail al-Khairat. A book read usually for propitiation, and in petitions to God.

Matn al-Jawhara in Divinity (Tawheed—Unity of God).

Manakib Assalihen (The Virtue of Pious Men).

Mankib al-Hassan wal-Hussain (The Virtues of the Prophet's Cousins).

Manakib Assayid al-Badawi.

Kasaid ahl Attarik (Poems of the Mystics).

Certain books from which texts of charms are copied.

Mawlid al-Manawi (Prophet's Life-story).

[1] A. F. Fahmy, *Latin Script for the Writing of Arabic* (Arabic), Cairo, 1944.

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Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

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One of the boys in the elementary training college is an uncle of another boy in the primary school, to which the latter was sent after his mother quarrelled with his grandmother and decided to live in a separate house. To assert her independence and prestige, she also decided to send her son to receive education in Aswan like his maternal uncle.

Here it is obvious that apart from the benefits that may be gained from such an education outside the village school, the impulse of emulation and rivalry, especially amongst kinsfolk, must be regarded as one of the strong forces that led some of these boys to be sent to school in Aswan. Moreover, except in the case of three boys, they are by no means the sons of the comparatively well-to-do people in the village. In fact, neither the Omda nor the village Sheikhs have any sons at school in Aswan.

The writer concludes this chapter with certain reflections concerning the function of modern education and the process of social change in Egypt. Many critics of this system have noted, with alarm, that the schools as they stand have outlived their function of producing government officials. The bureaucracy of the administrative machinery is already loaded. Out of a total expenditure of £43,558,884 in 1940–1, the salaries and wages of government civil servants and employees amounted to £15,799,001 or about 30 per cent; the corresponding figures for 1944 were £82,097,005 and £23,495,275 or over 20 per cent of the total State expenditure.[1]

Moreover, the effect of modern schooling is usually the alienation of the best boys in rural societies from their background, since they are only to be satisfied with a government post. One wonders what would happen to the economic productivity of the country if the expansion of education were envisaged purely in terms of the content of modern schooling.[2] The liability of the modern school products has been felt, and the irrelevance of their education has been criticized by many educationists and reformers.[3] It has been rightly stated that 'any programme for change should assess the part the school can play. For too often the school is a means of weaning the brightest boys and girls away from their local communities, when it should be more concerned with directing awakened interest to improve local conditions.'[4] As in the indigenous education of the village under study, education for social change must also take into account both the technical and the cultural aspects, and schools must

[1] *Annuaire Statistique de Poche* for 1946, p. 234.

[2] The average wheat yield in Egypt is 1,700 lb. per acre, nearly as high as that of Great Britain; corn gives the highest yield per acre in the world, while cotton, the principal export crop, yields an average of 606 lb. per acre compared with 328 in U.S. and 368 in the Soviet Union. Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[3] Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935. *Report on Educational Reform in Egypt*, Cairo, 1942.

[4] *Experience with Human Factors in Agricultural Areas of the World*. Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1949.

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contribute to the economic life being an important factor not less than labour and capital in the productive processes. As Malinowski puts it, 'Realism is safer than wishful thinking and the school must face squarely the end of the road on which it is leading the child and not impart hopes and illusions which are bound to be shattered. A sound society must be based on the even distribution of occupational groups—manual, skilled and professional.'[1]

Yet one should not lose the sense of proportion in evaluating the modern system of schools. Many achievements contributing to social change in Egypt have been facilitated through the modern school with its training in new skills, new ways of thinking and living. The position of modern secular education as a coveted type of education is the opposite of what it was a century ago. In the days of Muhammad Ali, and even after his reign, these schools and what they stood for, were opposed. Artin says: 'L'antipathie que le paysan égyptien éprouvait contre la conscription militaire s'étendit à la conscription scolaire.'[2]

Yet if it is easier to assess the expansion of this type of schooling and the increasing opportunities given to children of less affluent parents to obtain it, it is certainly a difficult task to point out why its content and organization have taken on the present frame. It is not easy to determine why its curricula are what they are, or why it has emphasized literary and theoretical aspects almost to the exclusion of practical training or why the secular system of education has existed side by side with a parallel system of religious education centred round al-Azhar.

Awareness of the historical and social forces that determined the existing content and organization is an essential step in educational reconstruction, since 'the intentions of educational planners are often challenged if they suggest new forms of educational institutions and new emphasis in the content of schooling'.[3] Sometimes historical antecedents are taken for granted without any critical evaluation. An example here may serve to illustrate these points. Modern schools in Egypt are the result of the impact of the liberal tradition of education in the West, as the intention of such schools has been the training of the *élite*, but it has been understood in Egypt that this brand is the only type of education worthy of pursuing. This system of schools was introduced at a time when the dominant cultures of the West, especially France and Britain, had a vocational and liberal education with different aims and different philosophies. The education policy, whether it was that of the French advisers of Muhammad Ali or that of the British, strongly reflected the liberal tradition.[4] Being a

[1] B. Malinowski, 'The Pan-African Problem of Culture Contact', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIX, 1943, pp. 651–2.

[2] Yakub Artin, *L'Instruction Publique en Egypte*, Paris, 1890, p. 80.

[3] Margaret Read, paper on 'Cultural Contacts in Education' referred to in the Introduction.

[4] Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II, London, 1908, p. 333.

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public school product, Cromer, for instance, was naturally dominated by 'the Whig tradition from which he could never unfortunately escape'.[1]

Neither in the indigenous way of training as seen in the earlier chapters nor in the literate climate of opinion in Egypt before its cultural contacts with the West, is there any distinction between vocational and liberal education. A literate man was not necessarily a person who could read and write, but one who had received moral and religious instruction, enabling him to lead the 'Good Life'. Moreover 'literate and illiterate' corresponded to 'employed and unemployed'.[2] From the writings of Ibn Taimiyah, one of the Moslem thinkers of the thirteenth century, there seems to be no distinction between education and vocation. He maintained that a vocation was one of the compulsory sciences which the community considered necessary to impart to its members. The duty of 'al-muhtasib' (the market inspector in Islamic institutions) besides inspecting the markets and the tradesmen, was to inspect the schools.

The distinction between 'culture' and 'utility' is not an intrinsic one and is based in the West on a view of a social order where human beings are divided into those who are capable of a life of intellectual pursuit and those who have to work to provide them with the necessary leisure for that pursuit.[3] Such a view has vitiated educational theory and practice for a considerable time and brought about the dualism of liberal and vocational education.[4]

[1] Lord Lloyd, *Egypt Since Cromer*, Vol. I, London, 1933, p. 161. See also S. I. Hammad, 'French and British Influences in Egyptian Education', M.A. Thesis, London, 1949 (unpublished).

[2] A. al-Jabarti, *'Ajaib al-Athar*, Vol. II, Cairo A.H., 1322, p. 214 (Arabic).

[3] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, London (1947 ed.), p. 294. See also Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture*, London, 1941. Lancelot Hogben, *Political Arithmetic*, London, 1938; *Dangerous Thoughts*, London, 1939.

[4] For a defence of pursuing knowledge for its own sake and for liberal education see Abraham Flexner, *Universities: American, English and German*, Oxford University Press, 1930. For an opposite view see Council for Curriculum Reform, *The Content of Education*, London, 1946.

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Chapter Twelve

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

THE preceding chapters represent a study of indigenous education in the village community of Silwa against a full portrait of the community life and organization. While it would be impossible here to gather up all the threads from which the whole survey has been woven, some general observations and conclusions can be made as an expansion of some of the issues already raised.

It must be emphasized here again that the education procedures, content and methods discussed in this work obtain in a relatively homogeneous, isolated community of small landholders. The characteristics and the end-product of these educative measures and child-training practices cannot be generalized without wider research in other areas and provinces having different cultural and economic backgrounds. A particularly relevant type of research would be, for example, in peasant communities of large farms, or in villages where there exists a number of families descended from old aristocratic families. Since large and small farmers may differ in a number of ways that are causally interrelated and self-consistent, one would expect that such differences would have their reflections in some aspects of children's education.[1]

Another general observation emerging from our functional approach is connected with the oft-heard criticisms of the irrationality of certain social institutions and customs in rural Egypt. Many social thinkers and reformers in Egypt have condemned the elaborate and expensive celebrations of circumcision, weddings, and funerals as pitfalls through which the conservative peasant falls into debt. The extended family has also been described as an institution that causes some of its members to shirk responsibility and become indolent.[2] It is apparent that these critics

[1] For sociological formulations concerning the interrelationships of the family, farm economics and kinship amongst a small farm population, see Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 1940. See also Julian H. Stewart, *Area Research*, pp. 123–4.

[2] A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya*. Also L. K. Tao, 'Some Chinese Characteristics in the Light of Chinese Family', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934.

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182 evaluate such institutions purely from the point of view of their immediate economic rationality and not as means of 'mutual adjustment of purposes in a total situation'. In such above-mentioned occasions, one can hardly fail to note the social values connected with prestige and the elements of reciprocity embodied in these forms of celebrations. Moreover, one cannot ignore the validity of their educative and cohesive functions. Since reciprocity is one of the major stabilizing forces in this community, its importance requires 'spinning out', since 'a solitary presentation of the principle would be ineffective'.[1] The economic method of interpreting social phenomena is one devised by particular workers as a means of considering such phenomena in the light of their particular field, and cannot be accepted as the whole or the sole explanation. The rationality of ceremonies and the functionalism of the extended family must be interpreted in the light of the community's social ends. In this connection, Firth remarks that '. . . economic activity is subordinate to social ends. It is only by studying those ends that one can see how particular economic systems work'.[2] It was pointed out how social and religious values render dealing in usury, or acceptance of compensation, repulsive to the moral code of this community. On the other hand, social prestige and rivalry
[578] combined with a weak ego-structure would explain why law-suits about land or other quarrels can be pursued with seemingly endless effort and expense, to the extent that such procedures might cost both sides more than the market value of the object under dispute.

Failure to assess social facts in their total cultural perspective has often
178 militated against the best intentions of reformers. Compulsory education
182 in terms of abolishing illiteracy has yielded negligible results, as shown earlier, even compared with the expenditure allocated to it. It has been related to neither the cultural needs nor the technical skills required in rural communities. Campaigns against infectious diseases must take into account the fact that, to the villagers, fear of contagion is subordinate to the rendering of reciprocal social obligation connected with sickness. The preference for reserving and offering the 'best food' to guests or strangers rather than be eaten by the members of the family for its 'nutritional value' must be viewed and understood first in terms of 'the people's values' concerning hospitality and generosity.

178 The adherence to traditional customs, beliefs, ways of thinking and
[156] living is the basis of the peasants' psychological security. That peasants rigidly adhere to their traditions and do not listen to 'reason' as explained to them by scientists or government officials has its root cause in this

[1] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 400. It is worth noting that in this community, as well as in many other parts of Egypt, the standardized social comments are legion as are also the respective responses in occasions of work, eating, drinking, building a house, after having a haircut, after toilet, on wearing new clothes, after having a
[576] bath, and on many other occasions for which good manners necessitate a particular expression or ejaculation and responding to it in a particular way.

[2] R. Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, p. 153.

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psychological factor. Professor Read has commented on scientists trained in the fields of agriculture, medicine, or economics, and brought up with great faith in anything labelled scientific, who do not easily realize that the peasant has a sense of security in his very insecurity. She further maintains 'that insecurity is the thing he knows, and he understands it in so far as he has always lived with it and adjusted his practices and his ideas in relation to it'.[1]

These remarks about some of the traditional ways of life in the village are only explanations of certain social facts and imply no value judgment. As Nadel maintains, the social enquirer at some stage in his analysis inevitably turns into a social philosopher and 'must posit absolute aims or purposes, and some self-reliant worthwhileness of actions, since without these assumptions his subject matter simply makes no sense'.[2] We believe that change there can be, and ought to be. But as we have been mainly concerned in this thesis with the analytical and explanatory and not the evaluative categories of enquiry, there is no point in dwelling on the latter here.

This study provokes also a comment concerning the generalization made about the nature of the face-to-face relations in a simple society and the value concepts attached to them. Some sociologists have maintained that, because of the integration of such societies, personal relations are smooth and intimate, and perhaps attractive, contrasted with the discontents of civilization and its disorganizing forces.[3] This seems to be another type of generalization similar to that refuted by anthropologists with regard to the groupistic and individualistic nature of behaviour amongst primitive and peasant societies.

In spite of his emphasis on the group behaviour of the Arab fellaheen, and on the importance of appealing to the whole community, Tannous also mentions incidents of rivalry, conflict, and competition among them.[4] In this study we have noted how the constituent social units of this community give rise to tendencies of conflict and rivalry. It has been shown how the susceptibility to friction in this community's culture finds in the early stimulation of sibling rivalry one of its supporting forces. Both solidarity and friction are cultural expectations among siblings, and this reflects itself in the village structure as well as in its structural relations with the rest of the G'afra villages. It seems that the equilibrium of the community is maintained through an elaborate system of social behaviour

[1] Margaret Read, 'Common Grounds in Community Development Experiments', in *Community Development Bulletin*, Vol. II, June 1951.

[2] S. F. Nadel, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[3] See Kimball Young, *Social Psychology*, in his distinction between the characteristics of primary and secondary groups. This is also evident in some of Redfield's writings. See also Lewis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*, London, 1934.

[4] Afif I. Tannous, 'Extension Work among the Arab Fellahin', in *Farmers of the World*, ed. by Edmund de S. Brunner, Irwin T. Sanders and Douglas Ensminger, New York, 1947 ed., pp. 78–100.

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571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.[1]

The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the 156 constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations. [500] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.[2] The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.[3]

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.[4]

[1] This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

[2] With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand [195] a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Psychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284–302.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

[4] Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

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Questions of motivation, drive, adjustment, frustration, methods of learning, reaction to authority, modes of fantasy gratification, and the end-product of all these forces in the ego-structure are important elements in the study of personality. In this study it was discussed how the social disciplines contribute to produce submissive, obedient children who lack the spirit of enterprise and initiative. Adults continuously wean their offspring from flights of imagination and spontaneity of action till they almost completely achieve their end by the time their offspring reach adolescence. Mead emphasizes the importance of the cultural methods of socialization as: 'The child will have as an adult the imprint of his culture upon him whether his society hands him the tradition with a shrug, throws it at him like a bone to a dog, teaches him each item with care and anxiety or leads him towards manhood as if he were on a sight-seeing tour. But which method his society uses will have far-reaching results in the attitudes of the growing child, upon the way he phrases the process of growing up, upon the resentment or enthusiasm with which he meets the inevitable social pressure from the adult world.'[1] 156

One of the important psychological mechanisms in the personality of individuals in the community culture of Silwa is the conception of the power of fate, a mechanism which is found in many other peasant communities. According to Kardiner such a mechanism is a tendency to shift personal responsibility on to others or on to supernatural forces. The prevalence of such a tendency is a cultural mode of displacing dependency on parent-surrogates, and thus escaping blame and punishment. With belief in fate one can correlate the presence of very little anxiety about sickness, misfortunes such as divorce, and indifference to self-improvement. It could be said that conditions of closed economy, together with the stifling weight of social and parental pressures, may be considered as important factors in this projective mechanism of fate. In a masterly passage about the Tanala culture of Madagascar, Kardiner maintains that: 'The belief in fate—singularly effective in shunting direct envy and overt-hostility—is a monument to the underlying absolutism which characterizes the culture. It shifts the responsibility from those who actually have power or advantages and places it upon a kind of mechanistic conception of human destiny. The chief function of the belief is to compel the individual to accept his role in life, and not bother those who exploit him, though he is given some right to attempt to alter his fate by magic means. If this fails, he has only fate to blame.'[2] Such is an illustration of the contribution that psychology could make to deepen our understanding of social facts. 154

In this work certain methods and techniques of childhood and adolescent training systems were correlated with some aspects of the cultural behaviour of adults and some of the major trends in their personality structure. In discerning such correlations, functional ties between certain 155

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 168.
[2] A. Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, p. 314.

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155 observed facts were noted by the writer, but no special effort was made to establish their causal relationships or irreversible sequences.[1]

In the light of this study, the psycho-analytical assumption of the relationship between some biological experiences in early childhood and certain adult character traits cannot be confirmed. It is difficult to reconcile, as in the case of the Navaho material, the adults' prevailing attitudes of suspicion, secretiveness, and high level of tension, with the permissive training of infants in breast-feeding, bodily affection and evacuation activities. If one takes the criteria of some psycho-analysts as the sole guide for personality formation, one would expect adults in this community to be cheerful folk, without much constraint in their personal relations, and free and easy in the communication of their innermost feelings and thoughts. One can infer from the data of this study that the experiences and disciplines of later childhood and adolescence are equally, if not more, important in the formation of personality structure of the adults. It is apparent from some sociological studies that to consider a particular experience as traumatic or not, or as favourable or unfavourable for individual adjustment, it must be regarded in relation to other aspects of child life, e.g. nutrition, health and sickness, economic conditions of life, and social disciplines.

From the Navaho studies, Kluckhohn concludes that psycho-analytical theorists are not wholly wrong, but they claim too much for the earliest years of life and do not pay enough attention to later events and to the total situation in which the individual matures.

'Infantile indulgence very probably does constitute the firmest foundation upon which, if late circumstances are reasonably favourable, a secure and confident adult personality can be developed. But it affords only a possible basis; it does not, of itself, promise fulfilment.'[2]

Such a conclusion was also supported by an experiment on rats in an attempt to evaluate the relationship between breast-feeding and acquisitiveness. Hunt experimented on albino rats to determine the effect of feeding-frustration in infancy and the tendency to hoard in adulthood. By comparing the number of pellets stored by two experimental sets of rats, one of which was subjected to periods of hunger, while the other was allowed unlimited feeding during infancy, he reached the following two main conclusions:

(1) The infantile feeding-frustration had no effect on the number of pellets hoarded, while both sets of adult animals were continuously satiated.

(2) The effect of infantile frustration on adult behaviour was shown by the fact that the experimental animals which had been frustrated in their

[1] See Simon Marcson, 'Some Methodological Consequences of Correlational Analysis in Anthropology', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

[2] C. Kluckhohn, 'Navaho Infancy and Childhood', in *Psycho-analysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, ed. by Géza Roheim, New York, 1947, p. 86.

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unlimited feeding during infancy hoarded more than two and a half times as many pellets as the other set in the post-frustration tests.[1] 155

It is possible to infer from the experiment on the rats that the early infantile experiences did not produce the expected trait unconditionally, but their fulfilment was contingent on later environmental conditions. It was hunger in these tests that made one set resort to its early experiences.

With the complexity of human needs and modes, the picture of the foundations of human personality becomes more complicated. But whether one follows the psycho-analytical interpretations or follows the framework of a learning theory based on the conditioning of attitudes and interests of children, one cannot ignore the important trends that are stamped on the individual's personality during his early stages of the process of growing up.

In this book, as stated in the introduction, the main concern has been with the general trends and attributes of personality in terms of predictable behaviour. Detailed case studies of individuals with differently constituted personality types would enrich and clarify such diffused and cross-cultural approach. This would reveal how different types of personalities face, handle, and react to the cultural realities, thus either achieving personal adjustment or becoming maladjusted.[2] No one should claim after reading this work that he knows exactly what to expect from every individual in this community, or knows exactly how every one of its members behaves in every situation. The variety and variability of behaviour and action, with which we were not mainly concerned, must not be neglected. Moreover the subjective element and the 'personal equation' of any writer cannot be completely eliminated in the art of writing in social science. 121

This work represents, moreover, an attempt to study educational issues in the broadest sense of the term, as a function of the cultural tradition that is transmitted to each generation. The 'transmissive' and 'reproductive' role of education in managing and perpetuating cultural organization, maintaining law and order, ways of sanctioning custom and action, have been discussed in this small community. The writer submits that such a type of research is imperative in a society where there are two educational traditions in juxtaposition: the indigenous and the modern. An objective evaluation of the interrelationship between these two traditions must be based on studies of the local culture, as well as an analysis of the aims and achievements of the modern system of schools.[3]

[1] J. McV. Hunt, 'The Effects of Infant Feeding-Frustration upon Adult Hoarding in the Albino Rat', in *Contemporary Psycho-pathology*, ed. by Silvan S. Tomkins, Harvard University Press, 1947, pp. 425–44.

[2] Karen Horney maintains that the child in coping with the world in its process of growing up develops one of three basic strategies of life: it can move towards people, against them, or from them. *Our Inner Conflicts*, New York, 1945.

[3] A strong plea for studies on childhood and educational institutions on those lines has been advanced by Professor Margaret Read in her inaugural lecture on 'Education and Cultural Tradition'. See also her review of 'Umbundu Kinship and Character' by Gladwyn Murray Childs, in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, 1951.

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REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The educational implication of such a study is its sociological orientation, by viewing the problems of education in relation to their social setting. Such an orientation would embrace, for instance, the study of children and adolescents in their home and community background. The study of an educational institution must be considered in its environment to assess the mutual relations between school and society.

With this orientation, and with the instruments of the functional approach, research was undertaken on 'A Sociological Study of a Grammar School in a Working-class Community'.[1] In this study it was shown how a school in the Dockland community in East London exhibits a cleavage between home training and school learning, and how the children find difficulties in their passage through the school. Chaos of valuations occurs in the minds of many senior boys and girls as a result of the conflict in the two educational streams: one, the governing class tradition of liberal and cultural studies for leadership and social mobility, and the other, of the local community tradition stressing subordination, yet urging the children's scramble for improving their social and economic lot.[2]

Studies of indigenous education also point out the suitability of the degree to which the methods and content of education fit the requirements of that society. Here the main question is not the sifting of bad or good educational policies. As Benedict puts it, 'the "best" education can be a weakness in a society that does not give the adolescent scope to put his learning into practice. The "worst" can be well adapted to all that will ever be required for him as an adult.' She further discusses how some permissive methods of training children amongst some primitive tribes may seem attractive to modern educators, but in the long run these tribes are not the better for pursuing such methods. One of the examples cited for discrepancies of aim and method is rearing children, in the tradition of 'breaking a colt' for an adult life, characterized by co-operative labour and sharing of rewards. The result of such lack of compatibility between child-training and adult requirements is the prevalence of aggression, mean gossip and bickerings in tribal life.[3] Some other tribes slowly graduate their children to adult responsibilities. Van Gennep's analysis of some *rites de passage* in connection with puberty shows how they correspond closely to the change of the individual's social relationships at this stage. The boy is separated from his child group, then kept alone without being integrated into any group before he is finally accepted into the community of adults. Thus the state of transition is enacted and the individual is given access to the necessary tools and equipment of his culture. In the light of some primitive educational policies, Benedict and Mead, as well

[1] Ph.D. Thesis by M. S. Brown, University of London, June 1950 (unpublished).

[2] For a study of the relationship between the school system and the social structure of a community, see W. L. Warner *et al.*, *Who Shall be Educated?*, referred to earlier.

[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Transmitting our Democratic Heritage in the Schools', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, pp. 722–7.

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as other anthropologists, have viewed the efficacy of modern education in schools, and the problems that face the adolescent in the modern complex society. They have pointed out the gaps in modern education in the transmission of the cultural heritage, especially at the stage of adolescence, when transition from childhood dependence to adult independence is expected to take place.[1]

As far as Silwa is concerned, it has been shown how the child-training practices impress on the growing individual the social norms with certain dominant themes at different stages. It has also been noted that the child-training system reflects many of the social and psychological attitudes of adult behaviour. Attempts have been made throughout this work to discern some correlations between adult values and personality structure, and techniques of instilling children with 'adab'. Children begin to adopt some of the cultural values of the community even during childhood, e.g. assertive, aggressive, and rivalry attitudes towards other children, while there is submissive and obedient behaviour towards elders; observance of sex regulations and behaviour before puberty; the earlier attainment by girls of sociological maturity, and so on. It was also pointed out from observations, tests, dreams and Rorschach responses, that the children's flights of imagination are curbed at an early stage, thus making the children show striking interest in adult activities of farming, ceremonial celebrations, and kinship relations. The policy of child-training in Silwa sets the pattern of the social relations of individuals in their groupings, and incorporates them as well in the productive activities of the community.

Against such a background of the cultural tradition, one can draw certain conclusions. One can see the contributions that an educational institution may make in the social and economic life of a community. One can ascertain the difficulties encountered in its proper functioning. Furthermore, one can view in proper perspective the complex process which children undergo in adjusting themselves to school curriculum and its values on one hand and to the prevailing conditions of home training on the other.

Many educational thinkers have emphasized the importance of relating the school to the needs of the community. In this connection it is often assumed that elements in the educational content of a community could be transferred easily with benefit to the school curricula, providing stimulation, and provoking the interest of the learners. Such assumptions often ignore the new situation which has arisen out of the cultural contacts. Those who are thinking in such ways wishfully hope to recreate the past; but in their zeal they tend to ignore the basis of the community's educative forces.[2] In this community, for example, the inclusion in a reading book of some of the local fairy tales, or the inclusion of some of the children's games in the school, would be considered facetious and undignified by

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea*.
[2] See M. Read, review of Gladwyn M. Childs' book referred to earlier.

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both children and adults. A faith in the practical subjects and in their educative value would be met with reticence in such a community. For such practical skills are considered to be of lower social status than farming; they are judged to be subjects unsuitable for inclusion in the school programme, as their acquisition occurs as a by-product of observation and routine.

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Studies of this type based on the functional approach towards the place of the school in its social setting are proving to be valuable guides to educational reconstruction. They also provide a buffer through their pragmatic analysis, against the various winds of educational doctrine which sometimes beat upon educational theory and practice with the force of a gale.

Sociological studies have also contributed to the modification of many generalizations about the social and psychological development of *the* child or *the* adolescent. It is becoming increasingly apparent that no study can make sweeping generalizations about the child or the adolescent, as we have always to ask questions about the conditioning factors, e.g. the home and environmental background; or, in a modern community, the class to which the child belongs. An American sociologist maintains that in American education, 'the ineffectiveness of middle-class sanctions upon the great masses of lower-class children is the crucial dilemma of our thoroughly middle-class teachers and school systems. Thus lower-class children remain "unsocialized" and "unmotivated" from the middle-class point of view.'[1]

If one talks in general terms about the development of children's imagination, the stages when they become capable of responding to authority, or of assuming responsibility, and about the conflicts of personal adjustment, he is denying the conditioning effect of social forces which play a potent part in the quality of the individual's development and in his social adjustment. Adult attitudes and expectations must be taken into consideration. It has been shown in this study how, in Silwa as among the Manus, children are almost completely deprived of imaginative potentialities and are very matter-of-fact at a very early stage. Children do not tinker with adult themes of life in their play as preparation for their future life.

To expect that certain characteristics of child development are absolute, irrespective of the adult world, would be to ignore the strength of the cultural tradition.[2] The study of the 'psychology of child development' must be contingent on that of the 'sociology of child development'.[3] The Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago main-

[1] Allison Davis and Robert Havighurst, 'Social Class and Colour Differences in Child-Rearing', in *Personality in Nature Society and Culture*, p. 263. See also their book, *Father of the Man*, Boston, 1947, pp. 10–11.

[2] M. Mead, *Growing Up*, pp. 267–8.

[3] An interesting example of research in the sociology of child development is a field study of social influence in groups of children by R. Lippitt, N. Polansky and S. Rosen, 'The Dynamics of Power', in *Human Relations*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1952.

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tains that an adequate background for the understanding of children and youth cannot be provided in a single department; it must be based upon various disciplines which would contribute to relating the different factors to human development.[1]

In Egypt, as in many Oriental countries, the textbooks on psychology for use in teacher-training centres and institutes are mainly based on the findings drawn from children in a Western setting. The characteristics of physiological, psychological and social maturity of children found in such textbooks are those observed and formulated by Piaget, Isaacs, Gesell and Wallon. The writer has not been able to trace any study of Egyptian children in their social environment. The carrying out of such studies should be the responsibility of the Psychology Departments of Egyptian Universities and the Institutes of Education, thus furnishing a socially relevant psychology of childhood and adolescence.[2] The lack of studies of children *in situ* in Egypt, as well as in other similar countries, makes much of what is taught about childhood psychology in teacher-training colleges in this area woefully inadequate. Psychological characteristics of children and adolescents are contingent on social conditions, and must not be assumed to be universal.

[1] Robert Havighurst and Hilda Taba, *Adolescent Character and Personality*, New York, 1949.

[2] For the need of such research, see Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*.

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PART THREE

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Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[988] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[909] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
[744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[153] [1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the New Testament.

[983] [2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and purity.

[900] [3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E10 exemption fee, those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. 159 [1944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [1988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [1938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [1955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

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159 in the Kuttab to improve his handwriting, as the maxim of the pious ancestors runs, 'good handwriting increases the clarity of truth'.

In the whole of Ali's life religion has meant much to him in terms of personal security. His need of recognition and for prestige is certainly satisfied by his knowledge of the Sacred Book and other sources of religious information. With his sensitive and shy nature he could not have integrated his personality except through this religious foundation. Moreover, Ali's subsistence resources have been secure so far as he is still dependent on his father and mother. At the end of every lunar month his older brother, Ahmad, carries Ali's family allowance of corn to the latter's house and no serious quarrel has occurred between him and his father or brother on these grounds. The harmony of relationship between Ali and his father's family could be also attributed to the fact that Ali still lives with his wife's people, who are about five hundred yards from his father's house, while his brother Ahmad lives in the father's household. Ali's father is about sixty-five years old, and is still a robust man, who works in the field, and is considered by his family as tight-fisted.

In contrast to his brother, Ali cares much more for his clothes and appearance in general, and this is one of the reasons his father sends him to deputize for him on various occasions. Moreover, while his brother has been a member of the 'Nakshabandi' mystic sect, Ali has never joined it, as his religious experience has been satisfied through his knowledge of the Koran and literacy, while his comparatively illiterate brother finds his satisfaction in the emotional ecstasy that is invoked by the repetitive rhythm of the mystic circle (zikr). Ali probably had not joined the mystic [593] order because his brother was already a member, and normally brothers are not found together in the Order. On asking Sheikh Hussein, who is the local head of the Order about this fact, I was told: 'Brothers do not come to the Order for the fear of the evil eye. Jacob advised his seven sons never to enter from the same door or follow each other; they should enter from different doors and always spread themselves.' Structurally, this is in harmony with the cultural values of hierarchy, order, and respect relations between brothers, as physical proximity between them in sitting or eating in public is not considered polite.

MAHMOUD

Mahmoud is illiterate, suspicious, and a proud man, so I had compiled his life history by asking him questions that would not arouse any scruples in his mind. He does not know when he was born, he remembers only that he just managed to escape the days of forced military conscription during the First World War, being two or three years younger than the eligible age.[1] This means that he is about fifty years old. My relation to

[1] These days are known in the villagers' language as 'sanatah al sakaria', when people [602] from the village were conscripted to work on the military roads or as camp sentinels in Palestine during the First World War.

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him was that of cousin-uncle, and I used to call him Uncle Mahmoud, which he used to appreciate very much.

Mahmoud is the eldest and head of a family of four brothers and a half-sister, as well as a cousin living together with them. Only one of the four brothers is a full brother of Mahmoud, the other being half-brothers, while the cousin is from the paternal side, and is also the half-brother (uterine) of the other two from their mother.

Mahmoud himself was first married to his cousin, whom he divorced after having a daughter from her. He remarried, but only one daughter has survived from his second wife, and the death of his son at the age of three was due, as he thinks, to the sorcery of his first wife. Two years after the death of his first wife, her daughter was married to Hassan, Mahmoud's cousin: there is one son. One of his brothers is married to a close relative of Mahmoud's wife, and all the brothers at present are married and work together, although recently two of them went to live in new and separate houses. Before the last two brothers married, all of them were working on their land as well as three acres they usually rent. More than ten years ago one of the brothers went off to work in Cairo as a domestic servant, and since then he has never settled in the village, but pays visits occasionally to see his wife and family.

None of the brothers is literate, except the youngest, who had been conscripted into the army and has there learned to read and write as part of the army's literacy campaign for conscripts. After completing his service he volunteered as a lorry driver in the army, where he works now, leaving his wife and a small boy under the guardianship of his brother, Mahmoud.

Returning to Mahmoud himself, he worked as a farmer until the age of thirty, then he became the head of the village police (ghafeer) and this job seems to have given much scope for his pride and energy. He would usually talk about the order he maintained in the village while he was occupying that post, and emphasize the fact that everybody respected and even feared him. He was dismissed from this post after he had struck someone in a fight, and for this offence he was imprisoned for eighteen months.

During his work as head of 'ghafeers', Mahmoud related with great pride that he managed to prevent the women from going to fill their jars from the Nile on account of certain rumours which had spread in the village about their behaviour along the agricultural road, and this temporary action from his side was met with general approval. It also befell him to carry out the wishes of the preacher from the city, to prevent women from following the bier of the deceased as mentioned in the chapter on social change. He added that, after his time, women reverted to their old practice.

Mahmoud goes to town now and again on business, but, apart from such interruptions, he spends most of his time in the village tending to his farm. Three years ago, one of his half-brothers had a disagreement with

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159 him and left him for Cairo, whereupon Mahmoud followed him to effect a reconciliation and the brother was persuaded to return.

A year ago he helped his cousin, who is not strong enough for farming, to open a small shop. The income from the shop as well as from farming is pooled by all the family, Mahmoud being the one who looks after the needs and requirements of all his brothers and their wives.

[755] Mahmoud is a great believer in the evil eye, and it was his practice to warn the writer against certain people by asking him to recite a 'Sura' from the Koran on passing them. He told the writer that he usually spreads on parts of his farm a handful of sand from the tomb of Saint Abu-Naggi, who lies buried on high ground, to ward off the evil eye. In this connection he related the following incident: once, a person well known for his evil eye deliberately passed by Mahmoud's farm and admired it. The same man later passed by his farm and admired his cow, which after that day gave blood instead of milk. As Mahmoud could no longer tolerate the envier, he seized upon the occasion of a funeral in the clan's guest house to which the envier belonged, and went to complain about him, holding a white flag and asking his clan to stop their kinsman from casting his evil eye on his land and animals.

Mahmoud is strong and healthy and takes special pride in the fact that the malaria epidemic did not touch him. He interprets this as evidence that his social intentions and dealing are genuinely good. And because of his health during the epidemic period, he used to visit and assist the sick, and since there were very few who could attend to the burial ceremony and prayers, he made a point of not missing any if he could manage it as attendance is a pious deed and God rewards it. He is also grateful to God [731] that he and his brothers managed to save their bread from the torrent that destroyed most of the village harvest in 1948. They all waded into the water, spending a whole night and morning in gathering their floating stacks of corn and removing them to the dry land.

In assessing Mahmoud's personality and position in the village, one must point out the structurally precarious composition of Mahmoud's family, consisting of half-brothers and a cousin. Yet his personality, together with the close relationship between the brothers' wives, has assured the unity of the family. This might also be due in part to the fact that none of the brothers has a grown-up boy, a factor that might tempt the father to work independently.

Mahmoud combines a conservative and unimaginative nature with extraversion and a great deal of self-confidence. Although he has been to town on frequent visits and occupied an official post, he has not altered his dress or accent in favour of town ways. His 'zabout', the outer garment, still has the long and wide sleeves that stretch at least three inches past the hand, his turban is a large one, and he is fond of carrying his thick stave on moving about in the village.

Mahmoud is a satisfactory example of the older generation of the village,

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both in mentality as well as in appearance. His wide connections with other families, his geniality and warmth, win him a great deal of respect and prestige. He is also called upon to participate in Arab councils and the writer heard him once telling off another person by saying, 'You have never come out from your place near the house oven, while it is for me to take a part in the conversation in a big gathering'. His qualities for leadership make him the sort of person whose co-operation would be necessary for any plan of social reform. Unlike many other people in the village, his prestige is not based on ownership of a large-sized farm, or piety, but he compensates for that through his personality as well as his brothers' solidarity. 159 [559]

Mahmoud used not to say his prayers in the mosque or anywhere else for a very long time, but lately he has observed them quite regularly and thus, at last, in his own words, 'God has shown me the right way'. I was told by one of his half-brothers that Mahmoud began to be regular in saying his prayers after the successive deaths of his two grand-daughters from his sole surviving daughter. One of his main grudges in life is that he has no son, nor are there any grown-up sons in the whole of the family. It is only two years ago that his cousin had a boy whom Mahmoud pampers and carries about whenever he is free.

Mahmoud is humorously known in the village as the best eater, especially when he was younger. He told me (and I heard it from others) that he challenged some people once to eat fifteen small 'kurs' (a loaf of wheat bread six inches in diameter and half an inch in thickness) with a 'ghamoos' (vegetable), and he succeeded in doing so. He is also reputed to be skilled in slaughtering lambs and goats, and in distributing meat on ceremonial occasions.

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Appendix Two

THE COPTIC AND THE LUNAR CALENDAR

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According to the Coptic Calendar the year is divided into twelve months of thirty days each, with the addition of five inter-calary days at the end of three successive years and six at the end of the fourth, and these days are called 'nasee' (prolongation).[1] As this calendar indicates the position of the earth in its orbit, it corresponds to the seasonal climatic changes around which farm work generally revolves. Though very

Coptic Calendar	*Corresponding European dates*	*Lunar Calendar (Higri). These months fall some eleven days earlier every solar year*
Toot	10th or 11th September[2]	Muharram
Babah	10th or 11th October	Safar
Hatoor	9th or 10th November	Rabi Awwal
Kiyahk (kiyah)	9th or 10th December	Rabi Tani
Toobah	8th or 9th January	Jamad Awwal
Amsheer	7th or 8th February	Jamad Tani
Baramhat	9th March	Rajab
Baramoudah	8th April	Shaaban
Bashans	8th May	Ramadan
Baoonah	7th June	Shawwal
Abeeb	7th July	Zul Ka'dda
Misri	6th August	Zul Hijjah

[1] Some of the Coptic Calendar months are certainly derived from names of ancient Egyptian deities, and this may be taken to indicate that this Calendar is older than the Coptic Church which still uses it to regulate its ecclesiastical year. The Coptic calendar starts from the year A.D. 284, the first year of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's reign, who persecuted the Christians in Egypt, and in commemoration of this event the Coptic Church adopted this year called 'The Year of the Martyrs' as the starting point for its calendar.

[2] Toot 1st begins on 11th September next to a Coptic leap year, or, when in the European Calendar, the following year is a leap year.

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few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:

He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:

If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:

Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:

Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:

In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:

The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:

One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:

The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:

The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:

Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:

One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:

Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.

[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

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when the land used to be flooded with the water of the Nile during this period.[1]

Thus these phrases connected with the Coptic months contain some of the community's wisdom related to its technical activities, food consumption and indications of weather changes. It is worth noting that while there are no fixed dates in the Coptic Calendar for any specific agricultural activities, the latter are carried out within a certain time-limit, such as the beginning of a month or second week in a month or towards the end or before beginning of such and such a month, and so forth.

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The following is a seasonal calendar for the various types of farm work as regulated by the Coptic Calendar.

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Toot	*The Winter Crop (Shitwi)* Either fallow land or early harvested millet: during the first ten days of the month land is sown with clover (berseem).
Babah	Sowing of wheat and barley (during the first ten days). First irrigation of beans and clover.
Hatoor	First irrigation of wheat and barley called 'cleaning irrigation'. Cutting clover before irrigation. Irrigation of beans.
Kiyah	Second irrigation of wheat and barley after distributing fertilizer. Cutting of clover for the second time.[1] Irrigation of beans and clover.
Toobah	Third irrigation of wheat, with fertilizer only for the weak section. Third irrigation of barley. Third cutting of clover. Irrigation of clover and beans.

[1] Clover is cut four times, at intervals of thirty days.

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Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. Last cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Misri	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

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1796 The following is the lunar calendar and the main religious events connected with it.

Lunar Months	*Religious Events*
Muharram	First day of the month is celebrated as the beginning of the new year. Tenth occasions a 'Rahmat' meal on ' 'Ashoura'.[1]
Safar	—
Rabi Awwal	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday on the 12th.
Rabi Tani	—
Jamad Awwal	—
Jamad Tani	—
Rajab	A 'Rahmat' meal to commemorate the Prophet's journey from Medina to Jerusalem 'Isral' on 27th.
Shaaban	Meal and prayers on the 14th.
[1785] Ramadan	The month of fasting.
Shawwal	On its first day is the breaking of the fast and the celebration of 'Id Ramadan, first feast.
[1788] Zul Ka'dda	Preparation for pilgrimage.
Zul Hijjah	'Rhamat' meal on the 9th day called 'Arafat'. Tenth celebration of the Great Feast ('Id al Adha).

[1] Ashoura is a Shiite event of lamentation and blood sacrifice to commemorate the death of Husain. In spite of the fact that the villagers are Sunnis (Malikites) they have a special meal to invoke God's mercy on their departed.

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Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product		*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat	..	6	24
1 ardab of barley	..	3	3
1 ardab of beans	..	6	6
			£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

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The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product	*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs ..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

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[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

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Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

		£E
Clothes	..	4
Tea and sugar	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.	..	1
		£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the *host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him*, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

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In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

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According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

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Appendix Four

A NOTE ON KINSHIP TERMS

After discussing the village social structure from a general viewpoint it is worth while describing the kinship terms. Though Professor Fortes considers the kinship terminology as a superficial way of approaching the social structure, it is a necessary approach, for they are handy techniques by which people sort out their relations with one another, and are accordingly able to assume the structural behaviour or produce the preferred responses.

Kinship terms in Silwa, as well as in the province of Aswan, are those generally used in Arabian society. The following list is an enumeration of these terms:

Om (class. Um): mother.
Jid (class. Jad): paternal grandfather (in inheritance procedures only he is referred to as 'regular grandfather': gid sahih).
Jid: maternal grandfather (distinguished from the paternal grandfather in inheritance procedures by calling him 'irregular grandfather': gid fasid).
'Am: father's brother, paternal uncle.
'Ammah: father's sister, paternal aunt.
Khal: mother's brother, maternal uncle.
Khalah: mother's sister, maternal aunt.
Wad 'Am (class. Ibn Am): father's brother's son—paternal cousin.
Bit 'Am (class. Bint 'am): father's brother's daughter.
Wad 'Ammah: father's sister's son.
Bit 'Ammah: father's sister's daughter.
Wad Khal: mother's brother's son—maternal cousin.
Bit Khal: mother's brother's daughter.
Wad Khalah: mother's sister's son.
Bit Khalah: mother's sister's daughter.
Akh: brother.
Akht (class. Ukht): sister.
'Adeel: wife's sister's husband. The word, literally 'balancing' in Arabic, indicating the equivalent and symmetrical position of the two husbands in the family.

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601 Silf: sister's husband.
Hama (clas. hamu): father-in-law.
Hamah: mother-in-law.
Naseeb: general category for male in-laws, literally meaning related.
Nasibah: general category for female in-laws.

It is also interesting to note that there is a distinction made between true brothers from the same parents called 'Ashika', and brothers from the father only, referred to occasionally as 'sons of the father'. The uterine brother is also called brother, and in inheritance procedures he is referred to as 'the concealed brother'. In the classical Arabic the grandson from the daughter is called 'Sibt', while that from the son is called 'Hafeed'. These two terms are not used, however, in the village, the persons concerned being referred to as 'wad bitty' ('my daughter's son') and 'wad walady' ('my son's son'). It is also significant to note the distinction between the patrilineal descent and the matrilineal descent. Relatives from the former are referred to as from the ''Asaba', which literally means 'backbone', while the latter are referred to as from the 'lahma' which means 'flesh'.

Such precie and defined Arabian kinship terms have led anthropologists to include them in the 'descriptive systems'. Yet distant relatives related to the patrilineal side, and of the father', or grandfather's generation, could be called ''Am' (paternal uncle), and less commonly ''Ab' (father) or 'Gid' (grandfather), and those on the mother's side are 'Khal'. Sometimes for a more distant relative the villagers, as they put it, 'calculate the degree', and find out the relations by abbreviating or simplifying the genealogy, eg. by considering cousins as brothers.

611 Though kindred is traced through both parents (bilateral), yet inheritance, and social groupings of the extended family, clan and section are based on the unilateral patrilineal principle of kinship.

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Appendix Five

THE WOMAN WHO SPEAKS IN KORANIC QUOTATIONS[1]

ABDULLAH IBN AL-MUBARAK relates: 'I intended to perform my pilgrimage one year, so I joined the caravan that was going to Mecca. On the way I overslept one night, only to find on my awaking that the caravan had left. While pursuing the caravan, I found a woman who had also lost her way. On my enquiring her name, she answered, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—and mention Mary in the Book".[1] So I knew that her name was Mary (Mariam). I offered her food, but she refused, saying, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God".[2] As I understood that she was fasting, I recited to her, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days".[3] To this she replied, "In the name of God . . . and that you fast is better for you if you know". Then I asked her whether she wanted to ride on my camel, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . and whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the Garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly".[4] So I knew she wanted to ride, so I made the camel kneel for her to mount, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . say to the believing men that they cast down their looks, and guard their private parts: that is pure for them: surely Allah is aware of what they do".[5] Immediately I knew that she desired me to be modest, so I turned away my face while she mounted. While I was urging the camel to get up, she quoted, "In the name of God . . . Glory to Him who made this subservient to us, and we were not able to do it".[6] On the way I asked her whether she had any children and her answer was, "In the name of God . . . and mention Abraham in the Book: surely he was a truthful man, a Prophet".[7] "O John (Yahya), take

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[1] Koran, xix, 16.
[2] Koran, ii, 184.
[3] Koran, xxiv, 30.
[4] Koran, xix, 41.
[5] Koran, xix, 26.
[6] Koran, iv, 124.
[7] Koran, xliii, 13.

[1] [For commentary on this story, see category 116, p.173-Gaulier]

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788 hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a
539 child."[1] "And to Moses, Allah addressed His word, speaking (speaking to him)."[2] So I understood that she had three boys by the names of Ibrahim, Yahya, and Mousa. On asking her how her sons were occupied she replied, "In the name of God . . . and landmarks: and by the stars they find the right way".[3] So I knew that they worked as guides on the desert routes. We went on conversing till sunset, when I offered her food to break her fast, and in gratitude, she said, "In the name of God . . . and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged".[4]

'In the morning we reached Mariam's home, and I met her three sons,
[574] who thereupon killed a ram, offering me a grand repast. Mariam herself invited me to eat, reciting, "In the name of God . . . eat and drink pleasantly for what you did".[5] Before I left their place, I asked her sons the reason for their mother's talking thus, always quoting from the Koran. They told me that, one day, while she was reading the Holy Book she came across the text, "He utters not a word, but there is by him a watcher at hand".[6] She immediately took a vow not to utter any statement from that time on which was not in the Koran, for fear of falling into sin.

'The following year, I went to call on Mariam at her house, and on finding her sons there, enquired about their mother. They told me she was on her death-bed. This saddened me, so I received permission to approach her, and drawing near her asked how she felt. She answered, "In the name of God . . . and the stupor of death will come in truth: that is what you shunned".[7] I remained at her side until she died, and then we washed her, wrapped her in her shroud, prayed over her, and buried her. I stayed alone beside her grave, and when night fell, I called out to her, "What has God done to you, Mariam?" I heard a faint voice answering as if from a distance, "In the name of God . . . and reward them, because they were patient, with Garden and silk".

'Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor the intense cold. And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass.

'(Transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure.

'And they shall be made to drink therein a cup, the admixture of which shall be ginger.

'(Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil.

'And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them, you will think them to be pearls, scattered, broadcast.

[1] Koran, xix, 12. [2] Koran, iv, 164. [3] Koran, xvi, 16.
[4] Koran, ii, 272. [5] Koran, lii, 19. [6] Koran, l, 18.
[7] Koran, l, 19.

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"And when you see these, you shall see blessings, and a great kingdom.

'Upon them shall be garments of fine green silk and thick silk interwoven with gold, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall make them drink a pure drink.

'Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed.'[1]

[1] Koran, xii, 21.

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Appendix Six

SOME PROVERBS CURRENT IN THE VILLAGE

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BESIDES those proverbs mentioned in the main text of the thesis the following are specimens of proverbs in the village dialect. It is to be noted here that some of the Prophet's sayings as well as some Koranic statements are occasionally quoted in a proverbial sense, especially by literate people. For a compendium of Arabic proverbs, see J. L. Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, London, 1930; and for the colloquial Egyptian proverbs, especially in towns and cities, see M. Taimour, *al-Amthal al-'Amia* (Colloquial Proverbs), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic).

Alli ma 'indush ma yilzamush.
He who has not, need not give.

Shatlak wala yidurrak.
What you plant shall never harm you.

Walad batny yiaraf ratny.
The son of my womb knows my language (lingo).

Nas ti'akkir wi nas tseed.
Some disturb the waters, others fish in them.

Kul shai gismah wi naseeb.
Everything is destined and is thus one's lot.

Alli yimil gantara lazim yithammal addoas.
He who makes a bridge of himself must bear the treading. (Said about a person who assumes the role of leadership with its concomitant responsibilities.)

'Ind ashadaid t'uraf al ikhwan (class. Arabic).
Adversities are the test of brothers (or friends).

Khisla fi al abai yarithuha al abnai (class. Arabic).
A trait in the fathers is inherited by their sons.

Addonia h!mal.
Life is burdensome.

Addahab yihtaj li asunukhal.
Gold requires the bran (wherein it can be hidden and preserved). (In other words the leaders of people need the support of the led and the less distinguished of their people.)

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Annas bi annas.
People can live through co-operating with, and consideration for, others (said to sanction the exchange of social obligations). 539

Alli yisheel girbah tnaggit alaih.
He who carries a water-skin must expect to get wet (or to get some water slopped on him).

Mid ryjlak 'ala gadr ghatak.
Stretch your legs according to the size of your blanket. (Cut your coat according to your cloth.)

Kulluh indal Arab saboon.
It is all soap for the Arabs (said for those who cannot discriminate in matters of clothes, food or social matters).

Alli y'ieeb, y'ieeb fi nafsu.
He who insults others, insults himself.

Min jawar al-haddad yibla bi naru.
He who is a neighbour of a blacksmith must suffer from the furnace.

Addunia bi khairha.
There is still goodwill on earth (when someone becomes suspicious of others).

Man taradda bi ridai lam yatraddah abeeh, yati 'alaih zaman yatamanna al moat feeh.
He who wears a robe that his father did not wear before him will witness a day in which he would desire death.

Annasab nashab wa in sah yibga ahliyah.
Marriage may bring wealth, and if it succeeds may become like kinship bonds.

Naseeb wa 'azz an-nasab, wi gaid himartu 'azz min al-walad.
My son-in-law is very much admired, and the rope that tethers his donkey is dearer to me than my son (said by mother-in-law).

Addukhool fi as shibak hain, at-tammul fi al-khurooj.
Getting entangled is easy, the difficulty is getting out.

Bab yijeeb ar-reeh, siduh wi astareeh.
A door lets in the wind, better close it and be comfortable. (It is better to prevent causes of friction.)

In ligeet ghadir fi tareeg wadi gul laih attareeg ma'ak.
If you meet a stray person in the desert, tell him that he is following the correct route.

Asseet wala al ghina.
Have reputation rather than wealth.

Ma ynoub alli yihajjiz illa tagtei hdoumoh.
The mediator trying to separate the two opponents would gain nothing but torn clothes.

Khud ma staak wa struk ma fatak.
Take what is coming and abandon what is past.

Ya ma nas marmar 'atabha, sakanu luhoud at taraib.

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539 Many were the people whose thresholds were made of marble, but who had to be buried in dust.

Alli yibus fi balawi ghairuh, tilhoun 'alaih balaweeh.
He who considers other people's sufferings, would alleviate his own.

Aih yakhud ar reeh min al balaat.
What can the wind scour from floor paving? (You cannot get blood out of a stone.)

Min 'ashar al goam arbaeen yom, ya sar, ya asbah minhum.
He who associates with a group of people for forty days would then either depart, or become one of them.

Alli laih kabeer ma yendaribshy 'ala dahru.
He who has a patron would not have his back beaten.

Alli maloosh kabeer yishtari laih kabeer.
He who has no patron should find one (lit. buy one).

Kul fula wi laha kayyal.
Every kind of bean has a special person to appreciate it (lit. assess it).

Kul sagtah wi laha lagtah.
Everything that falls has got a gatherer.

Al 'ajalah min ashaitan.
Haste is of the devil.

Yinfa'ak dahabak das, wi waladak min dahrak bas, wi tourak min bagarak.
You can only rely on your hidden gold, your child descending from your loins and your calf from your cow.

Sahib balain kaddab, sahib talatah mundfig.
He who has two minds is a liar, he who has three is a hypocrite (usually said about a person who marries more than one wife).

Al khaly yigool 'ads.
The one who is indifferent would say it is lentils (said to a person who tries to underestimate the difficulties of another). The proverb is related of a person who committed adultery in the fields during harvest time; he was pursued by another. During his flight he gathered a handful of lentils. On being caught he was asked why he was pursued; his answer was that because he had stolen a handful of lentils. Yet the pursuer said, 'Of course those who have not seen what he did would say it is a handful of lentils'.

Girat haz wala faddan shatarah.
A small amount of luck (a 'kirat' is one twenty-fourth of a feddan) is better than a lot of hard work (feddan).

Al jahil 'adow nafsu.
The child is the enemy of himself (his own well-being).

[538] For a study of proverbs and proverbial statements, see Edward Westermarck, *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930. From our list of proverbs we have omitted also those included in this book, e.g. 'Learning is better than goods; 'When the bull falls down, the daggers are many'; 'What the

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eye does not see, the heart does not grieve for;' 'The funeral is great, and the deceased is a dog';[1] 'He fasted and fasted and breakfasted on an onion,'[2] etc. 539

No attempt at any theoretical study of proverbs or any kind of classification has been made here. Reference can be made to the masterly way that Westermarck has treated the subject throughout his work, especially in the Introductory Essay. 538

Here we can only point to the fact emphasized by Westermarck, that a people's proverbs cannot be taken as indicative of their character without full knowledge of other facts that the proverbs do not state.[3]

[1] It is 'mouse' in Morocco.
[2] In Morocco it is 'He remained fasting for a year and breakfasted on milk'.
[3] For examples see Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 52-4.

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Appendix Seven

BOYS' RIDDLES

(mainly in the adolescent stage)

539 524 'One measure of clover covering this world and the hereafter.'
Answer: (Stars.)

'Something which looks like a man's covering which is woven neither by a Moslem nor by a Christian.'
(Loofah.)

'How many cups are in the sea?'
(The sea is that of knowledge and contains four cups which are the four schools of Moslem theology: the schools of Malik, Al Shafii, Abu Hanifa, and Ibn Hanbal.)

'How many "Kintars" are there in the "mountain"?'
(The mountain here is the Koran, so the mountain contains 114 'Kintars', as the Koran consists of 114 chapters.)

'How many "Kasabas"[1] are there in the universe?'
(There are fourteen 'Kasabas' in the universe: seven heavens and seven earths.)

'A tree that contains twelve branches and on every branch there are thirty leaves.'
(The lunar year—in fact, however, the lunar months are of thirty and twenty-nine days alternately.)

'Riding his mother and protected by his father.'
(The bullet in a gun.)

'A cripple who walks, a blind man who sees, a barren person who is pregnant, if she continues to be thirsty she survives, and with her the child she bears, but if she drinks, she dies and with her dies her child.'
(The laden boat at sea.)

'A boy and his sister, and a wife and her husband, amongst whom one distributes three oranges, each one getting a whole orange.'
(The sister of the boy is at the same time the husband's wife.)

'There was a wolf, a ram and some clover, and a man wanted to take

[1] A Kasaba is a length measure of 355 centimetres.

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them across from one side of the river to the other, provided he takes only one of them at a time. How could he manage that without losing any of these things, e.g. letting the wolf eat the ram, or the ram eat the clover?' 539 524

(He takes the ram first to the other bank and leaves it there. Then takes the wolf, leaving it there, taking the ram back with him to where it was. Then takes the clover across to the other side, leaving it beside the wolf, and returning to fetch the ram.)

'Our white camel scatters its feeding-stuff,
Our black camel gathers its feeding-stuff.'

(White camel is daytime when people disperse for work, whereas the black camel represents night when people gather for chatting.)

'The land is white, the sowing seeds are black, the cows are five, and the plough is one.'

(This is a representation of the hand (five fingers) writing in ink (black sowing seeds) with a pen (one plough) on a white sheet of paper (white land).)

'A boy with scabies rubs his head on another scabby head, and from too much rubbing the heads fall down piece by piece.'

(The upper and lower stones of a handmill grinding flour.)

'Ninety knights who run in one vessel.'

(The two wheels of the water-wheel, the upper horizontal wheel containing fifty teeth, and the lower vertical one containing forty, and both being in the well.)

'A white billy-goat, with red ears.'

(The 'maktaf' (basket) made of whitish palm-tree leaves, with two handles made of brownish palm-tree fibre.)

'Shakes his head while filling his belly.'

(The spindle.)

'Abuyah kitir malu
'ala akhti katabnalu
al bit jabat walad ya zein af'alu
baga abuyah, wibn akhti wana khalu.'
'Abuyah has plenty of money.
We've got him wed to my sister.
She had a child, who's done himself well.
He's the brother of Yah (Akhuyah), he's my cousin and I'm his maternal uncle.'

(Here the play is on the words Abuyah (first line) and Akhuyah (fourth line), where the former word means 'Father of Yah' and 'my father' and the latter word means 'brother of Yah' and 'my brother'.)

[apparently this should read Akhuyah -- analyst]

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Appendix Eight

THE STEWART EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TEST

SAMPLES OF TEST RESPONSES

125 Tests have been recently adopted by some social anthropologists:

1. To provide quick means for collecting useful material in relatively little time.
2. To draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape notice.
3. To be used as an objective check on one's own impressions, especially in the field of culture-personality relationship.
4. To provide means of quantitative analysis.

Tests, however, must be interpreted in their cultural context. Leighton and Kluckhohn assert that tests hold considerable promise in anthropological research, but owing to their present state of imperfection, must be used in conjunction with material obtained by the usual anthropological techniques of observation and interview.[1]

1. The Stewart Emotional Response Test

159 125 This test is a series of questions asking for experiences associated with five emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and shame, one question asking for the best thing that could happen to the child, and another asking for the worst that could happen.[2] After administering the test on twelve children, the responses of the following five children were chosen on the grounds of being the most complete performance. Three boys disclaimed their experience of such emotions, while others gave confused answers.

No girls' responses are recorded here. I found them most frustrating in [156] this respect, except in the Rorschach ink-blots. Young girls were 'giggly'; older ones were shy and uneasy. Their way out was 'I don't know; I am not a man'. They probably refused to co-operate because the tests were first administered on the boys from whom they heard about them. After

[1] D. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *Children of the People*, p. 213.
[2] Ibid., p. 243.

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trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless. [159] [125]

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.) [262]
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them.

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'. [369]

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5. I shall be angry if I have to leave the Kuttab.
6. I am afraid of the Ghost (Sul) and the shadows at night. I am also afraid of the scorpion and the snake.

B. *A boy of nine years:*

1. I became sad when the cow I was taking to the canal to drink, trod down the field and spoilt some of the plants; then my father came and brought it out from the plants.
2. When the ball I am playing with lands on top of the roof of a house which is not our house. Then I become afraid of climbing the walls to retrieve it.
3. I become afraid when I beat another boy and he goes to tell my father.
4. I felt angry when an older boy struck me, so I told my father to beat him.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*

1. When his father does not give him money to spend on sweets on market day he becomes sad and goes to his mother.
2. When his father sees him playing with other boys whilst he should be working, he threatens and frightens him.
3. He becomes angry when his father quarrels with his mother, spilling food and throwing it away.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*

1. He was sad when he went to the field, and on his return home discovered that he brought clover for the sheep, but forgot to bring vegetables for his mother.
2. He is sad when he is beaten without reason.
3. He gets angry when someone curses his father. It is only the illegitimate child who can hear his father being cursed and does nothing about it. To curse one's father is as blasphemous as cursing one's religion.
4. He would feel ashamed if he went about in rags.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*

1. I am afraid of Our God (Rabbana), and of father, and of those who are older than I am.
2. I am afraid of the cold, of hunger, and of not being properly clothed (lit. naked—'Iryan).
3. I am angry when I forget to say my prayers.
4. I would be ashamed if I had not had my hair cut.
5. I would be ashamed when my sister grew up and her breasts became conspicuous and she was still not married. Other boys would shame me by drawing my attention to my unwanted sister (lit. barren—bayri).[1]

When asked 'What is the best thing that could happen to you?' the previous boys gave the following answers:

[1] The same word applies to the uncultivated land.

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A. *A boy of seven years:*
To be able to play ball with other boys, without the interference of my younger brother.[1]

B. *A boy of nine years:*
When I find money dropped on the ground, or left around after the market.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
When I have a good meal with lots of meat.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
What do I want more than sufficient 'food and drink'?[2]

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
To be rich and endowed with 'baraka', and so be able to help the poor and feed the hungry.

When asked 'What is the worst thing that could happen to you?' the same boys gave these instances:

A. To be stung by a scorpion.
B. To be thrashed by my father.
C. That someone younger than I slaps me on the face and I am unable to retaliate.
D. To die in a fire or drown at sea.
E. To see my mother ill. To work as hired labourer on another person's land (not his father's).

[1] This boy gave almost this response twice, an acute symptom of sibling rivalry.
[2] This is an idiomatic Arabic phrase: the word drink cannot, of course, have the English connotation of intoxicant.

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Appendix Nine

MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

BAVELAS MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

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THIS test is designed to ascertain the public official moral ideas of the group. The child is asked for three things that would be considered good for him or for a boy of his age to do; and for the same number of things that would be considered bad to do. The individual responses are taken to indicate not just how the child acts in a given situation, but how he thinks people in general want him to act.[1]

The first part of the test was elicited in this way: 'What could you or a boy of your age do that would be a good thing for which father, the family or the people would praise you? Mention three things.'[2]

A. *Age Nine:*
1. Go on errands for my parents, buying tea and sugar for mother and cigarettes for father.
2. Memorize my assignment of the Koran.
3. I don't know anything else.

B. *Age ten:*
1. To take the cow to the farm and feed it.
2. What else? There is nothing more pleasing to father than this.
3. To lead the blind on the way.

C. *Age thirteen:*
1. To go straight without making trouble with other boys.
2. To fetch water home.
3. Attend to the animals in the field and at home.

D. *Age thirteen:*
1. To attend to his work.
2. Not to beat younger children.
3. To keep quiet and not play, as such conduct pleases his father.

[1] Alex Bavelas, 'A Method for Investigating Individual and Group Ideology', in *Sociometry*, Vol. V, 1942.
[2] The five boys tested here are not the same boys tested previously.

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E. *Age sixteen:*
1. To fetch fertilizer from the hills.
2. To be a 'pious boy' and obey his parents.
3. To save a swimmer who is in danger of being drowned.

Each of the same boys were asked: 'What could you or a boy of your age do that would be a bad thing, that makes father, family or other people think badly of you? Mention these things.'

A. *Age nine:*
1. To hit my younger brother.
2. Not to share food with him on being asked by my mother.
3. To be greedy in eating.

B. *Age ten:*
1. To neglect his work and play.
2. To break things.
3. To drop and lose money on being sent to buy something from the shop.

C. *Age thirteen:*
1. Not to feed the animals.
2. Not to fetch water.
3. To curse one's religion.

D. *Age thirteen:*
1. To swear at one's parents.
2. To play, for play makes one forget the Koran that one has memorized.
3. I don't know.

E. *Age sixteen:*
1. Not to be a good Moslem by not saying his prayers, and if having much money not helping the poor.
2. To be envious of other people.
3. To smoke and to tell lies.

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Appendix Ten

STORY COMPLETION TEST

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[125]

THE story completion test, composed of nine stories, is based on the pattern of stories devised by Pintner for the assessment of various aspects of the child's personality, e.g. attitude towards authority, moral tendencies, interests, wishful thinking, fears and anxieties.[1] Such aspects of the personality are not only important from the psychological, but also from the sociological viewpoint. The writer considers the use of such tests as relevant material for this study. Some of Pintner's stories were adapted, two were omitted, and story 5 was added. The test was administered in the following way. Every boy was told, 'I am going to start a story, and I want you to complete it in whatever way you like'. The boys were encouraged and occasional prompting was necessary on some points.

The following are the stories:

1. Once there was a boy sitting outside the house. He was not playing with other boys, but was staying all alone by himself. . . . (Why?)[2]
2. One day the parents of this boy got angry with him. . . . (What was it about? What happened? How did it end?)
3. The boy went to fetch water from the Nile on donkey-back. But on the way the water-jars were broken. . . . (What happened afterwards? Who punished him?)
4. In the street the boy was fighting with another boy. A man passed. . . . (What happened then?)
5. The boy saw his younger brother playing with a ball. . . . (What did he do?)
6. This boy had a friend he liked very much. One day he said to him: 'You come with me, and I'll show you something, but you mustn't tell anyone because it's a secret.' . . . (What did he show him? What did they do?)

[1] R. Pintner, 'Four Retests of a Personality Inventory', in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. XXIX, 1938. These tests were pointed out to the writer by Dr. Ramzy of the Institute of Education, Cairo, who used them in his thesis 'An Experiment in Assessing Personality', London, 1948 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

[2] The bracketed questions are examples of the promptings.

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7. It was night. The boy was sleeping, and suddenly he woke up screaming. . . . (What made him wake up? What was the matter?) 159
8. One night the boy dreamt he saw the angels during his sleep. They asked him to pray for something he wanted. . . . (What did he pray for?)
9. This boy is growing up. He likes to be a man. . . . (What would he like to do?)

The story completion test was given to seven boys and five of them gave the following satisfactory completions: [125]

A. *Age nine:*
   1. He does not play with the other boys because they are older than he is, and he is waiting for a boy of his age to match him in the game.
   2. His parents were angry because he returned late after being sent on an errand, and rebuked him for talking to other children on the way.
   3. When he breaks the water-jars his mother beats him and deprives him of food.
   4. The man beats the two boys who were quarrelling, tells their fathers about this, the fathers will beat their sons.
   5. He would not let his younger brother play with the ball, and immediately he sees him playing, he would send him on an errand.
   6. I don't know what he said to the other boy.
   7. He cried, 'Oh! Father.' He imagined a wolf or a ghost or thieves breaking into the house. He feared the dark and said, 'In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'.
   8. He prayed for a good garment and a fez.
   9. I don't know.

B. *Age nine:*
   1. The boy does not play with the other boys because they usually strike him; they do not speak to him, nor does he speak to them or sit near them. But later on he finds another boy with whom he is on good terms and plays with him.
   2. The parents got angry with the son, and hence did not feed him. This was because the boy did not obey his parents' commands, and such disobedience would bring God's anger. The boy had to go to some relatives to get food, but when his parents did not find any boy to run an errand for them, they brought him back to the house, and fed him, and thus they were reconciled.
   3. When the boy broke the water-jars he went weeping to his mother, who asked him how this happened. The mother became angry and struck him for his negligence.
   4. When the man saw those boys quarrelling, he separated them,

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159 and asked them to go away. But when the man was out of sight, the two boys returned to resume their fight. When one of them started to cry, the other fled, for if he waited, the father of the former boy would have caught him and struck him.

5. When the older boy found the ball with his brother, he snatched it from him; the younger boy started to cry. When the mother asked the older boy to give it back to his brother, he did. But when the mother went out, the older boy took the ball again and ran outside the house with it, looking proud and happy. The other boys asked him to show it to them and play together with it. When he returned home his mother spat in his face for taking the ball from his brother. He said that he did not take it, but it was given to him by his brother, who did not want it any more. Then the mother told him that he was a liar and asked him to hand the ball back to his brother.
6. When the two boys talked secretly, one of them warned the other against their enemy. They decided not to talk or sit with him or show him anything they had.
7. He screamed, saying that he felt some people trampling over him, and on asking them who they were, they refused to answer him. Then he shouted to be rescued: 'Oh, the One (Yawahid)' (a way of imploring God when in a state of distress, or when frightened, especially used in the village to summon other people for help, who on hearing such a cry, would immediately go to see what had happened).
8. He prayed for gold, clothes, shoes and socks.
9. He wants to grow up to farm and grow corn and go to Cairo. He also wants to get married. He does not want to become an old man with a bent back who is going to die.

C. *Age fourteen:*

1. The boy is angry because the other boys do not play with him.
2. He cursed his father and mother and thus made them angry. They thrashed him, and when he cried they sent him outside the house 'for the dogs to eat him'.
3. When the boy broke the jars, he was never sent again to fetch water, and his sister had to do it instead.
4. He interfered between the two boys, gave each a slap on the face and cursed their fathers.
5. The older boy took the ball from his younger brother to play with it himself. The father came and thrashed the older boy and rebuked him for being jealous of his younger brother.
6. He showed the other boy a place where gold was hidden. After collecting the gold, they sold it and with the money bought clothes, cars and bicycles.
7. He was afraid that they might be thieves who would beat him,

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and the people gathered to his rescue after he shouted 'Oh, the One'. 159

8. He prayed to God to make him find a hidden treasure.
9. He wants to grow up to take over his father's work in the farm, while his father remains in the village.

D. *Age fifteen:*

1. The boy must have been beaten by somebody; or the boys who are playing must be stronger than he, and might have torn his clothes.
2. After his parents were angry with him, he had to leave the village, looking for livelihood somewhere else. After some time he got homesick, as he remembered his family and people, so he started to send money and letters to his parents trying to make up for his desertion. When he returned to the village, the parents were happy as their son had 'redeemed' himself. The grandparents and the maternal aunts helped to bring about this reconciliation.
3. His mother asked him how the jars were broken. She thought that her boy was affected by 'the evil eye' of other women. So she asked him to step over the fire in which she had sprinkled salt which was cracking. If his father heard about his breaking of the jars he would have beaten him; mothers are affectionate.
4. If the man had passed by without separating or quietening the fighting boys, he would have been blamed for that.
5. He plays with his younger brother and appeases him with the ball, so his mother might be able to get on with her cooking.
6. He took the other boy away to a secret place to tell him about his enemy who wants to kill him.
7. A thief must have attacked the boy, so that he cried out to wake up his family to rescue him. He may be crying with pain (sick).
8. He wants to find gold and become rich and to be able to wear fine clothes.
9. He wants to grow up and become a pious man, get married and perform his pilgrimage.

E. *Age sixteen:*

1. He did not play with the other boys because he was a 'polite' boy and did not wish to cause any trouble to his people.
2. The boy quarrelled with the other boys and his parents became angry with him. He fled to another place to find work. His parents were worried about his flight, and sent telegrams to 'the government'. Later on he returned to the village and his parents accepted him (lit. collected him) for fear of shame.
3. When the water-jars were broken the boy went home crying and his mother consoled him by saying, 'It does not matter, this is a "sacrifice" (fida) for you. It's a "baraka" that the evil eye hit the jars and not you. Your neck could have been broken.'

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159 4. The man cuffed the two boys and gave them a lesson on how to be polite. He told them if someone cursed you or your father it is better to say 'May God forgive you', because the curse is actually inflicted on the person who curses, so it is better for him not to hit back, otherwise the curse will return on him.

5. He took the ball from his younger brother, and asked him to go to the Kuttab.

6. He must have told the other boy about money the former stole from his mother. The other boys on hearing this, said, 'With this money buy us something sweet to eat'.

7. The boy was frightened because he was 'seized' by a saint, vows to whom his parents had not fulfilled.

8. The boy prayed to enter paradise, be freed from disease and have no enemies.

9. He wants to grow up and memorize the Koran.

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Appendix Eleven

A NOTE ON SOME DREAMS COLLECTED IN THE VILLAGE

DREAMS are considered to be of value as a means of obtaining useful ethnological material, and thus could serve purposes similar to those of tests. The significance of dreams is hence relevant data for our study. It must be pointed out here that the writer was not fully aware of the importance of such data while he was in the field, and for this reason he did not collect enough dreams, and the ones recorded here are all those collected, without any selection.

In Silwa, women are reputed to be more capable of dreaming than men; they are also known to be better interpreters. Boys and girls do not communicate their dreams either to their parents or to other boys and girls. It was a great surprise for them to be asked to recollect dreams, and much effort was required by them to recall them.

It is believed that dreams are inspired by angels, or at least they are caused by some vaguely defined supernatural forces. The importance of dreams, especially as a means of forecasting future happenings, receives its religious justification from the story of the Prophet Joseph related in the Koran showing his infallible insight in interpreting dreams. At least, among men in the village, it is believed that the dreams of a person who sleeps ritually clean are truer than those of one who is not in the same state.

As in Tikopia, the weight attached to a dream varies according to the intensity of the personal situation at the time; a dream receives more credence in so far as it can be related to some question immediately at issue.[1] When a person is in a critical situation, e.g. financial difficulty, absence of a son, expecting decision in a law suit, or in the case of a pregnant woman, he or she does not only pay considerable attention to dreams, but asks relatives and friends to dream for him or her. On their part, such relatives and friends volunteer to tell such a person about dreams in which he or she may appear.

There is a certain formal technique of interpreting dreams, especially amongst women, which the writer did not investigate. The narration of

[1] Raymond Firth, 'The Meaning of Dreams in Tikopia', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934, p. 63.

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The narration of

159 dreams usually starts by saying, 'I dreamt, May God render it good and blissful' (Allahum ijalu khair wazain), the listener usually answers, 'Good, if God wills' (khair insha Allah).

It is worth noting here that most of the dreams recorded reflect in their manifest content many features of the waking life in the village. As for their latent content, it is left to the psychologist to see in it the working of the unconscious.[1] The writer is aware of the lack of associations related to the 'working situation' of these dreams to render their psychological interpretation adequate.[2]

In some of these dreams, however, one cannot fail to recognize representations of imaginary fulfilment of ungratified wishes, sexual and otherwise, e.g. performing pilgrimage, eating meat, receiving money.

In children's dreams especially, one is struck by the strong indications and symbols, without much secondary elaboration or distortion, of anxiety, fear, and ambivalence. Anxiety and repressed fear of authority are reflected in symbols such as that of the child's fear of his head being cut off by the barber (a dream of the castration anxiety type); rolling down the sloping ground and dying (No. 2; if ground symbolizes mother this dream reflects uncertainty about mother's affection and hence an ungratified wish); being stung by a scorpion, which may be taken as a symbol of father and authority, but the boy was not dead; he was on a bed in a dark room, which represents the mother (wish for regression, No. 8). Ambivalence is obvious in dream No. 1, where an unconscious fear of the father (barber) is combined with another wish to please the father by fetching water; and also in dream 5, where ambivalence is reflected in indications of sibling rivalry for the father's love.

Such repressed desires and resentments reflect some of the unconscious pressures in the process of growing up, and to some of which allusions were made previously.

BOYS' DREAMS

Age eight:

One day I was going towards the fields when I found the son of the village barber cutting off the heads of some people with his razor. He approached me while I was on donkey-back and told me that he wanted to cut off my head too. I entreated him not to, for I was going to fetch water for my people, whereupon he let me go.

Age nine:

I was once sleeping on a mat on sloping ground. Suddenly I began to roll down, and died.

[1] 'No wish . . . is able to produce a dream unless it is either unconscious or else associated with an allied unconscious one.' Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1948, p. 165.

[2] Géza Roheim (ed.), 'Dream Analysis and Field-work in Anthropology', in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, New York, 1947, pp. 37–130.

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Age fourteen:

I was once in the fields when suddenly a group of people drew near to me. I started to run and they pursued me, but I escaped. 159

Age ten:

I dreamt we had many chickens and ducks. One day my mother went to feed and water them, but she found that they were all dead. This was by 'God's will', for they were not eaten by a wolf or anything else.

Age twelve:

I dreamt that I was catching fish in the pond near the railway station. When I had caught a fish I went to show it to my father. Beside me there were two other boys fishing. When I caught a big fish and I wanted to show it to my father, the two boys snatched it and ran away.

Age ten:

I dreamt that I was looking for stray money after market day. Every time I searched I found a coin which I put in a tin with a lid. At last I filled the tin with money which became my property.

Age fifteen:

There were black monkeys swimming in the canal and people were trying to catch them. But every time they attempted it, the monkeys dived into the water. At last they managed to get hold of them, took them out of the water and tied them to a tree. Later, they released the monkeys and made them fetch grass and clover from the field for the cows.

Age twelve:

I dreamt that I was stung by a scorpion. Then I was put on a bed with a mat on it in a dark room. People thought I had died and set up a wailing for me, but I was not dead.

Age fifteen:

I dreamt that my father returned from Cairo with another man. He brought me three pairs of shoes, four gallabiahs, a turban and a cap. My father himself was wearing a new pair of shoes and a new turban. And I also dreamt that when I got up in the morning I could not find my father.

GIRLS' DREAMS

Age eleven:

Once I dreamt that I fell into a pond, through my foot slipping. With me, at the time, were other girls who did not help me, but I managed to get out by myself.

Age twelve:

Once I was attacked by a monster with bulging eyes, protruding teeth and jet black skin. While it was getting ready to strike me, I began to weep.

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Age thirteen:

I dreamt once that I saw the Prophet under a green dome. Then I called upon my sisters to come and shake hands with the Prophet saying, 'He is like my father, but better than him(?)'

Age ten:

Once I was crossing a very large bridge, and suddenly it collapsed and I was drowning in the canal. I cried, 'O father, O people, come and rescue me'.

Age twelve:

Once I dreamt that I found a pigeon which took me on pilgrimage. Whilst I was in Mecca I found a treasure. Then I returned home on the pigeon's back. Later on I took my grandmother, maternal aunt and my sister to visit Hijaz (Holy Places). We spent the treasure on building a big palace. Then suddenly a lion appeared; I was so frightened that I woke up.

Age ten:

One day I was sitting in the street looking at a book. Then came 'azzabbal' (trader who collects chicken droppings in exchange for female wares, e.g. needles, thread, salt, spices), and reminded me of the book I had promised to give him, but I told him that I could not give him any book, for fear of the teacher. Then 'azzabbal' took me on to the top of a wall and threw me into the river. I remained swimming around for a long time without knowing where to go, till I woke up.

MEN'S DREAMS

Age about twenty-eight, my informant Ali:

I dreamt that my father and mother-in-law had been preparing themselves to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. I asked my wife, then, to prepare food for me to join them on their journey, and the three of us went to the shrines of the Holy Places.

Age twenty-eight, Ali:

I dreamt that I was attacked by a bull with big horns. He trampled on me but I managed to escape for a while. The bull persisted in pursuing me. At last I held him by the horns which he kept on shaking in attempting to free himself, but I jumped on his back. It ran towards the Nile, and as he dived into the water, I jumped off on to land and escaped.

Age twenty-five:

One day I found a stray camel running loose into our farm. I went towards the camel to drive it away from the field. But all of a sudden I saw a naked man who said that he was the owner of the camel, and warned me against doing any harm to his animal. Then I grabbed the man by the neck and we began hitting each other. After he suffered from

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my beating he fled. (This young man told me that he found this dream difficult to interpret, so he related it to a person who is known to be good in interpreting dreams. The latter told him that the camel was his 'karina'; and everybody has a 'karina' that follows him in his life and causes him a lot of trouble and needs to be propitiated.) 159 [987]

Age twenty-two, just married and had a newly-born girl:[1]

I dreamt that my wife was pregnant, and she brought forth a boy. When I consulted my father about naming him, he insisted on calling him by the name 'Mostafa'[2] but I wanted to give him another name, and there was disagreement between my father and me. (The man connected this dream with the fact that later on his wife brought forth a girl whom he called Zainab, and that his father fell ill.) [987]

Age forty-five:

I dreamt that I was transformed into a 'green sparrow', and that on the Night of Kadr (the night of the 27th of Ramadan)[3] I entered Paradise where I stayed for seven years. Overwhelmed by the vastness of Paradise I enquired whether there was an end to it, and I was told that it had no end, and that there was neither sun nor moon; there one suffers neither heat nor cold; people sleep on couches; there are palaces the like of which have never been built on earth, fruits that have never been grown on this planet. While I was told all this, two people were holding me, one by the right arm, and the other by the left. But all of a sudden, a man came from behind me and pushed me out of Paradise saying, 'You don't deserve it yet'. (He commented that after this God helped him to perform his pilgrimage.) [987]

Age forty approximately:

Once I dreamt that Ahmad (the wealthiest village shopkeeper) was climbing a palm tree, and suddenly fell to the ground. People gathered round him and tried to revive him with 'the smell of onions and garlic'. When he recovered he said, 'I have fallen from above. But I am safe, thanks to God.'

WOMEN'S DREAMS

Age forty-five:

One day I went to the well adjacent to our clan's guest house, and found at the entrance of the guest house the man who draws the water from the well. Inside the guest house there were plants growing, such as clover and sugar cane. The man asked me to enter the guest house 'to see my father's farm'(?) When I entered I found that the northern section of the guest

[1] This dream was just before his wife gave birth to the baby.
[2] This is also the baby's grandfather's name.
[3] According to Moslem belief, the Prophet invisibly during this night made a journey from Mecca to Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. It is believed by the villagers that there is a certain unknown hour on this night, during which prayers are always answered.

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159 house was dark with two empty water jars, while the southern side was lit and with two full water jars. I asked the man the reason for this. He told me that I was not permitted to ask such questions, but merely to look around. Then I asked him to give me some clover for my sheep as this was my father's land. He said that he could not give me anything as he was only a guardian. Then he took my water jar which I had filled and placed it in the guest house, saying, 'This water jar should not enter your house'.

Age seventy-five:

I dreamt that my father was sitting talking with 'Hag abu-Ghannam' (a pious man). The pious man's face looked dark (lit. smoky) while my father's face was bright and shining. Then the pious man asked me whether I was capable of going to see my relatives, who lived in another village, but my father said, 'No, she is not strong enough for that'.

Age thirty-five:

I dreamt that I was riding a donkey which on hearing the sound of a train threw me into the canal. In the water I found some grass tuft to which I clung. Then I discovered an iron rail leading to the bank on which I walked and so got out safely.

Age thirty-eight:

I dreamt that last year I went on pilgrimage, and saw the Prophet's tomb which has four doors, one in the east, one in the west, one in the north and one in the south. I entered the tomb from the west door while other people were looking through a window. On the north side of the Prophet's tomb there was a minaret. (The woman commented that when she told one of the pilgrims about this dream he confirmed these details, [178] and this meant that one day God would enable her to perform this religious obligation.)

Age thirty:

I was eating meat with another woman. While we were eating another girl came whom I did not know, and we gave her a portion of the meat, while we went on eating the rest. (The woman commented that meat in [178] the dream is a sign that something good may turn up unexpectedly.)

Age about forty:

One day a man came and presented me with a load of chaff and I was very pleased. (She commented that when she told her mother about it, the latter said that it might mean they would receive some money to buy [178] their ration of sugar and some clothes. After three days her husband, who works in Alexandria, sent her two pounds.)

Age thirty:

A woman neighbour was playing on the tambourine and singing with other women celebrating her son's circumcision ceremony. I filled my jar

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with water to give to her as a help for the ceremony. While I was pouring my jar into the water pot of her house, the women who were there started singing for me. I was frightened. (She commented that the 'tambourine' is an evil omen in the dream and indicates that something bad may happen.) 159 [1987]

Age forty:

During the wedding ceremony of our neighbour a man gave me two coins, one for myself and the other for another woman (X). X was greedy and wanted to take the two coins. (She commented that the dream was realized, as next morning X's daughter brought forth a boy, and on the evening of the same day, she gave birth to a son.) [1987]

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Appendix Twelve

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF INTELLIGENCE TESTING

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THREE intelligence tests were carried out on the elementary school children in the village. They were: 1. Kabbani Primary School Intelligence Test; 2. Porteus Maze Test; 3. Alexander Pass-along Test. These tests were chosen from those available at the Institute of Education, Cairo, as representing different types of test material.[1] The first test is a verbal one, the other two are of the 'performance test' type, one being paper and pencil, while the other is practical manipulation of blocks of wood. The purpose is to test the children's ability to deal with ideas and symbols as well as their handling of concrete material and solving a practical problem.[2]

The Kabbani test, based on the Ballard Intelligence test, has been standardized on primary school children in Cairo.[3] As the test involves reading and writing it had to be confined to those boys and girls who had sufficiently mastered these skills, and this meant that it could be administered only to the children of the third grade, numbering thirty-one boys and girls.

The Porteus Maze was given to practically all the school children—127 boys and girls. Burt's modifications in administering the test were followed.[4] Only two minor changes were made: the first was that the plan of the maze was explained to the boys and girls as 'paths in a field' instead of 'paths in a garden'; and the second was that the child was asked to enter the field from the right side of the paper instead of the left, as this is more in keeping with the way of writing the Arabic script.

The Pass-along test is composed of pushing cubes of coloured wood on a board to match them with a similar pattern presented on a card. It was

[1] See Introduction.
[2] For the advisability of using a combination of verbal and performance tests see Drever and Collins, *Performance Tests of Intelligence*, Edinburgh, 1948, p. 12.
[3] I. al-Kabbani, *Primary School Intelligence Test*, Cairo, 1939 (Arabic).
[4] Cyril Burt, *Handbook of Tests*, London, 1948, pp. 98–9.

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administered only to eighty-five boys and girls chosen from each of the three grades in alphabetical order, as the administering of this test takes a relatively longer time. 125

The following table represents the frequency distribution of the intelligent quotient of the thirty-one boys and girls according to their scores in the Kabbani test. 153

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	2	4	6
40–49	1	1	2
50–59	6	3	9
60–69	3	4	7
70–79	2	4	6
80–89	1	0	1

The frequency distributions for the Porteus Maze and for the Pass-along tests are:

PORTEUS MAZE

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	0	1
40–49	0	0	0
50–59	3	6	9
60–69	10	19	29
70–79	14	21	35
80–89	16	12	28
90–99	7	2	9
100–109	10	1	11
110–119	1	2	3
120–129	1	0	1
130–139	1	0	1

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PASS-ALONG

I.Q.	Frequency		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	3	4
40–49	0	1	1
50–59	0	2	2
60–69	0	8	8
70–79	3	8	11
80–89	1	9	10
90–99	11	2	13
100–109	11	10	21
110–119	8	3	11
120–129	2	1	3
130–139	1	0	1

For the results of test I the following remarks may be made concerning the interpretive significance of its scores.

1. As far as this small group of thirty-one boys and girls (with an average chronological age of eleven years eight months for boys, and eleven years four months for girls) is concerned, the results fall below the average norm of intelligence compared with urban children on whom the test was standardized.

2. The distribution in the sample, however, roughly follows the normal distribution.

3. Comparing boys and girls, the latter tend to have slightly higher scores on the whole than the boys.

For the results of tests II and III one notes that:

1. Unless the sample of test I happens to be of low intelligence (an assumption for which there is no apparent justification except the small number) tests II and III appear to be better tests than test I. In these tests children, including the sample in test I, have scored average and even superior I.Q.s. In test III, especially in the case of boys, the curve shows a skew towards the superior I.Q. tendency.

3. Boys on the whole have better scores in these performance tests than girls. In the Porteus Maze test only three girls out of sixty-three are above the average (100), while thirteen boys out of sixty-four fall above the average. In the Pass-along test the area representing boys of average or above average I.Q. is larger than that of the girls.

It is to be noted here that one of the boys who is mentally deficient and could not handle the test problems of the performance tests at all, is called 'Shaikh' (saint) by the rest of the school children. Among the adults there

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are in the village four people who may be considered by psychologists as insane or mentally deficient but are regarded as possessing a 'saintly touch'. However, the use of these three types of intelligence tests tends to indicate, apart from the difficulty of sampling, that the children have an intelligence of the practical type. The nature of the performance tests is perhaps nearer to the problems of their serious activities of everyday life. On the whole they scored better in Pass-along than Porteus.

It is worth mentioning that some of the children who came out well in the performance tests did very badly with the verbal test, and this could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the children with the intellectual items of the latter. Apart from the mathematical items, this unfamiliarity could be demonstrated by item 8, Section 1. In it, the child is asked: 'If you want to give your mother a present what will you choose: a skipping rope, a toy, a silk stocking or a bicycle?' Although the obvious answer according to the test is 'silk stocking', which some children gave, others gave 'a skipping rope' or 'a bicycle' while none chose a toy. On asking a boy why he chose a bicycle, he answered that after giving it to his mother he would take it back for himself. Some of those who chose the rope thought that it was a useful thing for mother as she 'would hang the washing on it'. The difference of value-attitudes implied in such items and their influence on answers given, is similar to that classical example given by Klineberg with regard to one of the items of the 'National Intelligence Test' which was administered to some children of an Indian tribe. In this item the subject is presented with the words: crowd, closeness, danger, dust, excitement, number, and is asked to underline only two words which are the necessary characteristics of the crowd. Although 'closeness and number' are the correct answers according to the key of the test, yet many of the Indian children underlined danger and dust and in other cases excitement. According to their own logic and experience these answers seem to be the right ones.[1]

In our case the results of testing by a verbal test brings out the validity of applying tests standardized for urban children to rural children. By no means all the children who took the Kabbani test are mentally deficient, but the test itself is overweighted with items that are more suitable to city children, and may fail to sample adequately those abilities in which the rural children excel. In the United States and Britain studies of urban-rural differences in intelligence have revealed that rural children are neither uniformly nor consistently inferior to urban children on all tests.[2] Our small-scale testing tends to confirm the conclusion that while rural children score low in tests of abstract intelligence, they may excel in tests of the mechanical or practical type.

Although doubts could be cast on the quantitative results of tests that are not standardized for a particular community, such tests could be used

[1] Otto Klineberg, *Race and Psychology*, Unesco, Paris, 1951, p. 11.
[2] A. Anastasi and J. Foley, *Differential Psychology*, New York, 1948, pp. 823-7.

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153 as instruments of differential qualitative analysis. Nadel expressed the view that intelligence tests 'in their specific adjustment to cultural groups would already reflect specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence'. Such an approach would not be so much concerned with assessing degrees of intelligence, as 'analysing types and qualities of intelligence'.[1] The concrete, matter-of-fact orientation of children's intelligence in Silwa did not only exhibit itself in the relatively better performance in the Pass-along test, but was also revealed in the ease in which their attention was engaged in the performance tests compared with the verbal one. Moreover, in the case of performance tests some boys and girls after getting stuck at some point in the testing asked me whether they could bring an older boy or girl who could help them or who could 'solve it better for me'. This attitude seems to be a reflection of the cultural pattern in which an older person is supposed to know better and hence should be consulted.

It has become increasingly evident that experience in different cultures and even different socio-economic groups in one culture, may lead to basically different perceptual responses and lend different meanings to a similar test situation. Moreover, one cannot ignore the importance of cultural motivation in assessing test results and interpreting numbers and scores.

Japanese children have been found to excel American children significantly in tests involving sustained attention, visual perception or spatial orientation, while falling behind on verbal and arithmetic tests. It is also reported that Chinese groups excelled the Japanese in the Binet type of tests and in auditory memory span, while they scored lower in the Porteus Maze and in all performance and mechanical aptitude tests.[2]

[1] S. F. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, p. 197.

[2] Anastasi and Foley, op. cit., pp. 739–40. For the effect of cultural values on intelligence and other psychological tests, see Klineberg, op. cit. See also M. Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, where she mentions that the aesthetic interest of children in Samoa overshadowed the task of solving the test problems.

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Appendix Thirteen

REMARKS ON THE RORSCHACH TESTING

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THE Rorschach ink-blots test was administered to male adults, and to some of the school boys and girls, twenty subjects from each group. The test was administered at the writer's home, always after a friendly chat with the subject. With the first few tests on the school children, it was found that the children attempted to give responses in 'classical Arabic', but this difficulty was soon got over when the children were told that the task had nothing to do with the school. The original idea was to give these records to a Rorschach expert in Egypt, but unfortunately he was prevented by illness from undertaking the task of interpretation. Consequently, the writer took a three-term course on the technique at the Tavistock Clinic, Institute of Human Relations. Thus any failure to give a full account of the results of testing can be attributed to his lack of sufficient experience. The method of scoring and interpretation is mainly based on that of Rorschach himself and also that of Mons.[1]

The interpretation of children's records is not attempted here, but the interpretive significance of the adults' records is given.

The first striking fact about the records is that none of the twenty subjects rejected any of the cards during their performance. The average number of responses totalled twenty-five (the average responses for a sufficiently productive person according to the experience of Rorschach experts is twenty to thirty). Thus from the quantity of their responses one is inclined to infer that the members of this group show on the whole a capacity for productivity and persistence. They try to do their best in performing a task, and do not give up easily.

The proportion between 'whole responses—W' and 'detail responses—D and d' is 14 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. This suggests a tendency to view situations in a practical and concrete manner. In other words the members of the group in their intellectual approach are more concerned with realistic situations than with abstract concepts. Moreover, their pronounced interest in minor details (d and Dd) suggests a tendency

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*. W. Mons, *Principles and Practice of the Rorschach Personality Test*, London, 1950.

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159 towards fussiness. Many of the subjects repeated the same responses in different cards or in the same card. From this one may venture to conclude that they are rather obsessional in their habits and tend to tackle their problems at random. Furthermore the proportion of wholes to human movement (W : M) being 4 : 1 suggests that their mental output is mostly reproductions of other people's ideas accepted without critical thinking.

The very high percentage of 'pure form F' responses, amounting to 82 per cent, leaves one without doubt, according to Rorschach principles, that these people are very rigid in their outlook and approach towards life (the reasonable intellectual control is represented by 50 per cent F responses).

This rigid intellectual control and desire for conformity is also confirmed from the records by very low frequency of human movement responses (M). The percentage of M responses is 4·5; and out of twenty persons fourteen persons gave no M response at all. The quality of the few M's given is not vigorous or lively on the whole. All this suggests that these villagers have great resistance against revealing their fantasy life which is kept under control by their caution and their preference for a more conventional and restricted mode of expression (F%). Their fantasies are to a great degree inhibited and they make little use of their creative imagination.

With regard to colour (C), only four did not give any colour responses. When the proportion of M to C is examined (1 : 3·5) one can state that these people are on the whole extratensive, and more readily responsive in their emotional reactions to the external world. Their emotional life tends to find its main outlet more in outer reactions, conventional procedures rather than in mature fantasy or introspection. In ten cases there is a balanced outer maturity, judging by the almost equal number of FC and CF, while in the remaining records there is a definite tendency towards impulsiveness and lack of maturity, shown by preponderance of CF over FC.

These are some of the striking observations on the interpretive significance of the Rorschach records of this group, showing some of the basic traits of the personality structure in this group.[1] The small sample, however, would not allow for unreserved generalization. Moreover, the individual differences are quite apparent from the different responses in the group. The following are samples of the Rorschach responses:

[1] The interpretation of these records is by no means complete; it lacks for instance analysis of content and quality of organisation. I have tried, however, to follow Rorschach experiments in the study of culture-personality approach. See E. Oberholzer, 'Rorschach's Experiment and the Alorese', in *The People of Alor*, by Cora du Bois, Chapter XXII. Theodora M. Abel and Renata A. Calabresi, Chapter XIII in *Life in a Mexican Village*, by O. Lewis. Leighton and Kluckhohn, *The Children of the People*.

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SAMPLES OF MEN'S RECORDS

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Mahmoud—informant.

Card No.	*Performance*[1]
I	dog
	woman
2 minutes	cow
	man
	buffalo
	boy
	young girl
II	big woman
	virgin girl
4 minutes	calf
	dog with open mouth
	ram
III	cock
	monkey
4 minutes	fish
	fish
	man
	another man
	mouse
	rabbit
	duck
	cock
IV	elephant
	bird
4 minutes	lion
	dog
	train smoke-stack
V	woman
	tongues
3 minutes	two people arguing
	crocodile
	man
	crocodile with wide mouth
VI	bird
	constable
2 minutes	old man
	bull
	cow

[1] Enquiry omitted.

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Card No.	*Performance*
VII	camel
	woman
3 minutes	rabbit
	ewe
VIII	flag
	ewe
3 minutes	ewe
	man
	man holding the ewe by its leg
IX	man wearing his turban
	man riding his horse
3 minutes	donkey
	ewe
X	poisonous snake
	woman
3 minutes	another snake with its mouth open and tail curled
	scorpion
	mouse
	rabbit
	table with a bottle on it
	scorpion
	a sleeping woman

Ali—informant (30 years).

I 1 minute	middle part looks like 'sea scorpion', outer parts wings
II 3 minutes	the red parts look like two mice, dark parts like wolves or crows, lower red part butterflies
III 3 minutes	a human skeleton, with a stomach attached to it, the red part like two lungs—opening of anus with faeces emerging
IV 2 minutes	an animal which I don't know, and has two eyes and two horns, the whole thing may be some sort of decoration
V 1 minute	a bat, with two ears, two legs and two wings
VI 30 seconds	something decorated

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Card No.	*Performance*
VII 1 minute	two people facing each other, putting a hand behind back, and lifting the other
VIII 1 minute	monkeys on a hill, or perhaps a tent with a pole in the middle
IX 1 minute	two animals, with a pole in the middle
X 7 minutes	two people falling on their heads from the top pole lion rabbit's head like the inner parts of the body, throat and lungs yellow flower bud

Man—fifty years old.

I 2 minutes	a bat vine leaves a black insect frog
II 1½ minutes	rabbit pencil the leg of a pigeon
III 1 minute	a picture of a man human heart gall bladder hands
IV 1 minute	looks like a huge rock with pipes hanging down human legs
V 1 minute	mouse sparrow's feet sparrow's wings
VI 1½ minutes	statue pole on which statue stands bird's claws
VII 1½ minutes	bird camel tree leaves or stones

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Card No.	*Performance*
VIII	a picture of a monkey
	tree from which monkeys are hanging
1 minute	roots of the trees
IX	perforated tree leaves
1 minute	red tomatoes
X	smoke-stack
	an entrance door
5 minutes	picture of a bird
	scorpion
	frame of a picture
	(this is the strangest card)

SAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Card No.	*Performance*
Boy—10½ years old.	
I	two men clapping with their hands
	two mountains
1 minute	mosque
	dome
II	plants
	roses (red)
4 minutes	pigeon
	head of a cock
III	two cocks
	foot of a man
3 minutes	cock
	frog
IV	man
30 seconds	
V	kite flying
30 seconds	
VI	camel
30 seconds	
VII	

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APPENDIX XIII

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Card No.	*Performance*
VIII	dome
	cat
1 minute	water jar
IX	tree
1 minute	vine leaf (green)
X	mouse
1 minute	woman

Boy—fourteen years old

I	Jinn (ghost—black) with its two eyes, mouth, horns and
2 minutes	feet
II	mosque
	blood (red)
2 minutes	dogs with ears
	open space
	ears
	mouth of a dog
III	like ghosts
	blood (red)
2 minutes	necks of ghosts
	their feet
IV	mountain and clouds over it (black)
1 minute	stones
V	wasp (black with feathers)
1½ minutes	these are its wings and legs.
VI	statue
1 minute	black garment
VII	devils with horns. These are its tails, and they are sitting
1½ minutes	in a dark place
VIII	dome
	lion
1 minute	red soil
IX	fire (red and yellow)
1 minute	firewood

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APPENDIX XIII

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Card No.	*Performance*
X	like a garden
	lion
3 minutes	deer
	face of a donkey
	fallen plants (scattered green)
	wood
	camels

Girl—ten years old.

I	camel
	kite
1½ minutes	crow
II	two monkeys, these are their legs and they are putting their
1 minute	hands on each other
III	a man, another man
	rose
1½ minutes	hands of the men, their feet
IV	wasp, these are its wings
30 minutes	
V	wasp, these are its feet and this is its mouth
1 minute	
VI	mosque, these are its walls, its stairs and its dome
1 minute	
VII	hill, stones
30 seconds	
VIII	mice
	hell (red)
1 minute	Paradise (green)
IX	monkeys, sitting on stones and hitting each other
30 seconds	
X	a man riding a donkey
	deer
2 minutes	pigeon
	cock, hen, rabbit, cock, hen

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APPENDIX XIII

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Card No.	*Performance*
Girl—twelve years old.	
I	a tree with some people sitting on the top of it
	stones
3 minutes	bird
	duck
II	men putting their hands on each other, and wearing caps
3 minutes	on their heads, facing each other
III	monkeys with a red nose, the monkeys are sitting with their hands and legs cut off
3 minutes	a man putting his hand on his waist
IV	a lion sitting with a small head
1 minute	
V	a wasp on the ground with its wings and ears
2 minutes	
VI	a corn mill, people pouring seeds into the mill
1 minute	
VII	small fish in the water
30 seconds	
VIII	a cat on the tree and eating from it
30 seconds	
IX	people praying in the mosque
30 seconds	
X	water wheel with its pole
	donkey
3 minutes	owl
	butterfly

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

THEIR RELIGIOUS SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE TO-DAY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SURVIVALS FROM ANCIENT TIMES

BY

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IN CHARGE OF THE PERCY SLADEN EXPEDITION TO EGYPT 1922–26

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPHS

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ROPE-MAKING AT AKHMÎM

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TO

MY MANY EGYPTIAN FRIENDS

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

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FOREWORD

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HERODOTUS, the father of anthropology, might have been surprised to learn that he was destined to number daughters as well as sons among his intellectual progeny. There can be no doubt, however, that Miss Blackman can justly claim to be reckoned in the direct line of his descendants. In Egypt, her chosen field of research, Herodotus gathered some of his most valuable material. His method too was like hers, namely, to take down the traditional lore of the folk as it came fresh and straight from their lips. The ideal collector of folklore must have a genius for hob-nobbing. From lettered priest to unlettered peasant, all classes of the population must be on gossiping terms with him. Of course, he does not plague them with set questions. Though he keeps a note-book handy he does not flourish it in their faces. He makes it his business not so much to talk as to listen. If the soul of the people is to be revealed they must be overheard as, all unconscious of the presence of the stranger, they fuss and chatter about the affairs of the hour—about the prices of the market and the state of the crops, about yesterday's funeral and to-morrow's wedding, about the donkey's sore back and the sore eyes of the baby. The secret, in short, is to observe unobserved. The folklorist should be capable of melting like a disembodied spirit into the atmosphere of the local life. Or, if he is to be noticeable at all, let it at least be in some character that is strictly consonant with his surroundings. Thus Miss Blackman might possibly have preferred to dispense altogether with her widespread reputation for healing power. Yet to go about trailing clouds of contagious virtue was at all events more in keeping with prevailing notions of normal behaviour than if they had happened, say, to be clouds of exotic scent.

Moreover, not only is anthropology the product of friendly relations, but it likewise produces them. I am thinking more especially of the great kindness which Miss Blackman experienced everywhere at the hands of the leading officials of Egypt. They were evidently in full sympathy with her scientific aims. Unfortunately,

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121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

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largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT

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PREFACE

114 121 THIS book represents but a small portion of the work upon which I have been engaged in Egypt during the last six years. I have spent, on an average, six months annually in the country, living almost entirely among the *fellāḥīn*. I wish to make it quite clear to my readers that the customs and beliefs, [183] and the general manner of life, described in this book represent those of the peasants only; by the upper classes they have, of course, long been discarded. These customs and beliefs are of great importance and interest in themselves, but the fact that most of them are very ancient makes it still more urgent that they should be adequately studied and recorded. Already my researches have thrown light on points hitherto obscure to students of ancient Egypt; hence this book may, I hope, be not only an addition to anthropological knowledge, but also a contribution to Egyptology.

121 It has been my aim to describe the life of the modern inhabitants of the Nile Valley in the simplest way, avoiding technical language, for my purpose in writing this book has been to interest the general public and present them with a readable and, at the same time, true description of the peasants of Egypt.

114 121 I want to emphasize the fact that though the contents of this book form but a tithe of the information I have collected, yet even so I am only at the beginning of my work. Many years of research still lie ahead of me, for the sources of information are very far from exhausted. When my work is more nearly complete my intention is to produce a large and strictly scientific volume on the beliefs and practices and the social and industrial life of the modern Egyptians.

121 I have endeavoured to be strictly accurate in all my statements. Every custom and belief here dealt with has been most carefully inquired into before I committed it to paper. Nevertheless, those who are experienced field-workers in anthropology know how easy it is to make mistakes and to misunderstand, even after careful investigation, the true inwardness of things. I therefore invite

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121 criticism, and I hope that, if I have misunderstood a point, my Egyptian friends will not hesitate to inform me. I am most anxious that educated Egyptians should recognize the importance of the anthropology and folklore of their country, and my earnest hope is that some of them will be persuaded to take up this study. They surely, if they received the proper training, would be best able to undertake anthropological research among their own people. Before very long I much hope that I may see a flourishing anthropological institute established in Cairo, forming a centre for all such research work, not only in Egypt itself, but in adjacent countries—for who knows how far the influence of ancient Egypt has extended? Some writers in England even postulate an almost world-wide diffusion of Egyptian culture!

I have said that I am only at the beginning of my work. I have not as yet touched Lower Egypt, and my idea is to include in my researches not only the whole of Egypt proper, but the Egyptian Oases and Lower Nubia. I must also undertake a far more intensive study of the provinces which I have already visited, carefully recording all local differences. This of course requires many more years of hard work.

The cult of Muslim sheikhs and Coptic saints is a subject in
[114] which I have particularly interested myself. I have not dealt with it here in detail, as I hope shortly to bring out a book dealing solely with the beliefs, ceremonies, and mythology connected with these venerated persons.

122 I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grants which they have made me during the last four years, and to the Royal Society and the Committee for Anthropology in Oxford for supplementary grants. I owe much also to the encouragement and kindly appreciation of my work which I have received from so many in the University and elsewhere, and to the support afforded me by the special committee appointed by the British Association to promote the furtherance of my researches. To the
000 officials in Egypt and to the Egyptians generally I owe more than I can express. Without the assistance and facilities afforded me by the officials, and the friendliness I have encountered among all classes alike, it would have been quite impossible for me to have accomplished the work I have done. Some of the officials have personally assisted me in my investigations, and the way the

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peasants have welcomed me into their lives has enabled me to get into much closer touch with them than is possible for the ordinary foreigner. I can truly say that the kindness generally that I have received has made the years which I have spent in Egypt the happiest in my life. My desire is that I may be able to continue my work and leave behind me a true record of the many interesting and ancient customs of that most attractive country.

To my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, I am indebted for all the ancient analogies. Not only so, but he has devoted hours to the careful perusal of my manuscript, and moreover has seen this book through the press and made all the indexes, thus enabling me to carry on uninterruptedly my researches in Egypt. If, therefore, the book achieves any success I feel that much of that success will be due to him.

To the Councils of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Folklore Society, to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, to the publishers of *Discovery* (Messrs Benn), and to the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Evening News* I am indebted for permission to include in this book articles of mine that have already appeared in their various journals and papers.

To Professor J. L. Myres I must here express my sincere thanks for reading through all the proofs in collaboration with my brother; and to Mr E. S. Thomas, late of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and now Assistant in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thanks are due for supplying me with better translations of the Arabic charms, etc., than I had before.

All the photographs, I should state, have been taken by myself, with the exception of a few which were taken in 1920 by my friend Mr D. J. V. Forster, of Pembroke College, Oxford, at my request, on the occasions when he was present with me at the ceremonies which they illustrate.

I have purposely suppressed the names of people and villages in nearly every instance as I do not think it would be either desirable or fair (see p. 231) to publish them in a semi-popular book of this kind.

Finally, I should like to point out that with the spread of education the old customs and beliefs are already beginning to die out. It is thus most important that they should be recorded at once, before they suffer complete extinction. I hope, therefore, that my work

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may not be left unfinished for lack of financial support, and that this book may awaken sufficient interest in Egypt and in England to induce those who have the means and the power to support my researches for some years to come and to enable me to bring them to a successful conclusion.

WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN

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CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

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Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. I. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

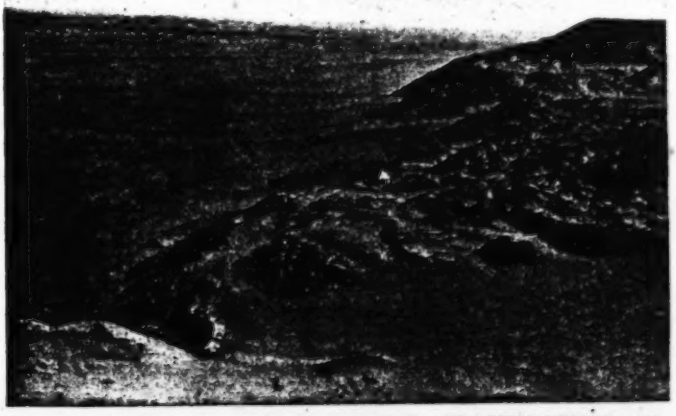

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder.
One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[172]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

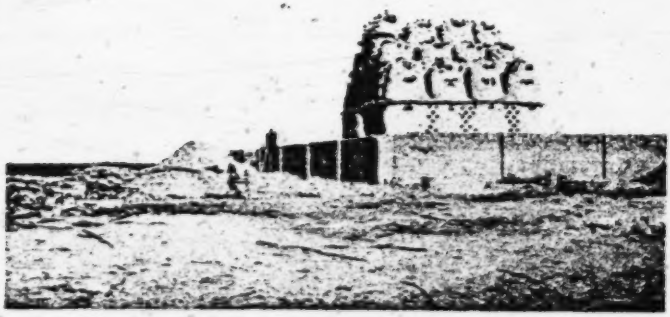

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii. 97.

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times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

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with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in ; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings ; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

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443 454 carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

342 789 531 554 The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

[363 137 342 291]

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

744 The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

000 A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

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A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

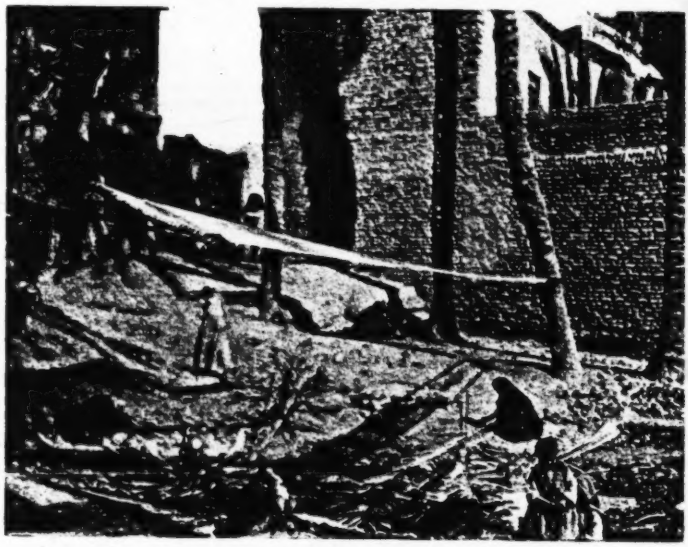

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

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347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *ǧalālīb* (long blouses; singular, [394] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

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sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

[312]
[133]
[137]
[241]

FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHĀDŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

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of which she would be the mistress. I have, however, no territory available for this purpose except the submerged land of el-Hun. It is in many respects favourably situated. It is a convenient distance from my capital. It is surrounded by desert. My daughter will thus be independent, and protected.'

" ' Quite true, great King,' responded Joseph, ' when would you wish it done ? For accomplished it shall be by the aid of Allah, the all-powerful.'

" ' The sooner the better,' said the King.

" Then Allah inspired Joseph with a plan. He directed him to make three canals ; one from Upper Egypt, a canal on the east, and a canal on the west. Joseph collected workmen and dug the canal of Menhi from Eshmunēn to el-Lahūn. Then he excavated the canal of el-Fayūm and the eastern canal, with another canal near it called Beni-Hamed to the west. In this way the water was drained from el-Hun ; then he set an army of labourers at work. They cut down the tamarisks and bushes which grew there and carried them away. At the season when the Nile begins to rise the marsh had been converted into good cultivable land. The Nile rose ; the water entered the mouth of the Menhi Canal and flowed down the Nile Valley to el-Lahūn ; thence it turned towards el-Fayūm and entered that canal in such volume that it filled it, and converted the land into a region irrigated by the Nile.

" King Raiyan thereupon came to see his new province with the courtiers who had advised him to set Joseph this task. When they saw the result they greatly marvelled at the skill and inventive genius of Joseph, and exclaimed : ' We do not know which most to admire, the draining of the marsh and the destruction of the noxious plants, or the conversion of its surface into fertile and well-watered fields.'

" Then the King said to Joseph : ' How long did it take you to bring this district into the excellent state in which I find it ? '

" ' Seventy days,' responded Joseph.

" Then Pharaoh turned to his courtiers and said : ' Apparently one could not have done it in a thousand days.'

" Thus the name was changed from el-Hun, or ' the Marsh,' to el-Fayūm, ' the land of a thousand days.' "

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CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [852] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [744] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

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Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

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562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[426] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

586 A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
428 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
581 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment ; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

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The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

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152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the [834] women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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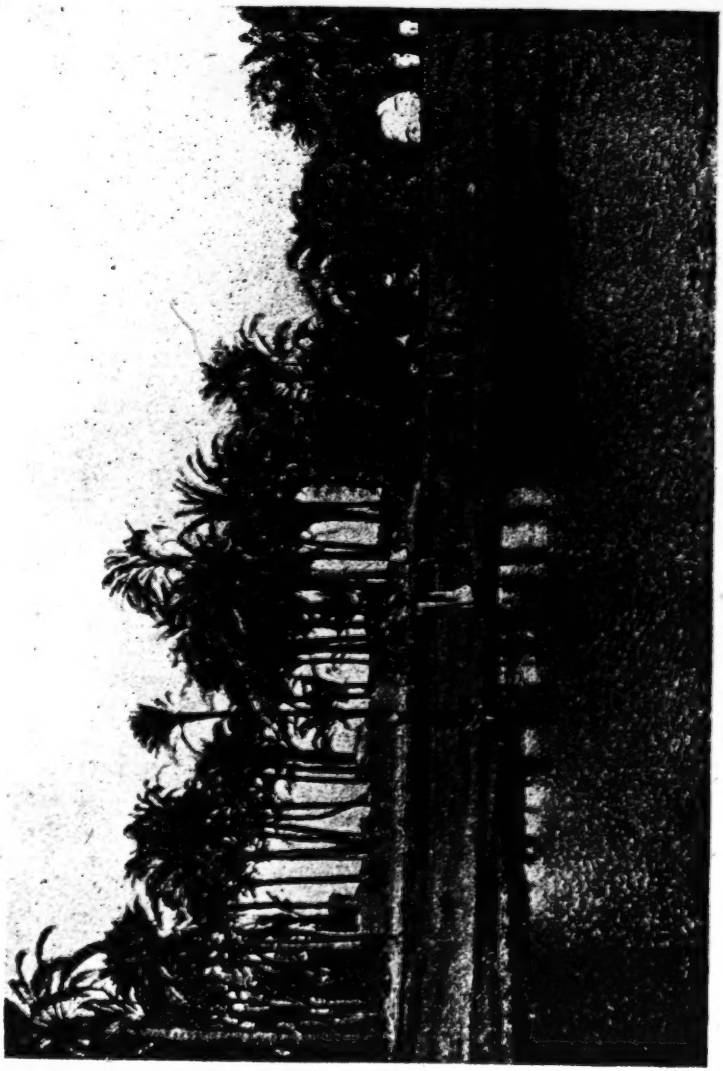

FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

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854 784 755 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders 755 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have 854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing 164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently [144] allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffering. [784] As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great [515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which 743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally 758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their 197 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, 164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in 743
England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are 758
supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is 177
lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as 164
we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance 181
in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is
low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise 562
it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and 521
this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, 831
before whom they discuss the most private matters without the
slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years [855]
hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most [577]
revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in
such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and
women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in
my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives
with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position
to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who
are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the
most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way
as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage 581
is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the 562
desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. 290
It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the 858
jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn
coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or
outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man.
In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard
it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the
latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian 582
Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages 656
which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbid- 183
ding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen.
However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False 692
ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up 582
the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he 577

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692 582 577 obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

145 849 163 165 181 [292] [140] 577 831 562

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

684 [554]

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believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 597 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 [12]

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114 121 because of my real affection for them, and because I very greatly desire to see their lives improved, especially from the moral standpoint, that I venture to speak openly on a subject in which I am much interested—*i.e.*, how to assure a more wholesome childhood and a higher mental training for the girls, so that they may be better and wiser wives and mothers.

114 181 I have every cause to speak of these people with affection, for their courtesy to me has been unbounded, and I have often marvelled at their patience and cheerfulness, even in the midst of poverty and great privations, which they bear with a courage that enforces respect. Their kindness to each other in times of trouble is most marked, and they will as a rule, however poor they may be, share their scanty fare with one whose position may be even worse than their own. This nobler side of their character shows what a fine people they might become were the women, the chief influence in any community, to receive a better training in childhood, a more suitable education, and to have held up before them a higher ideal of life.

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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

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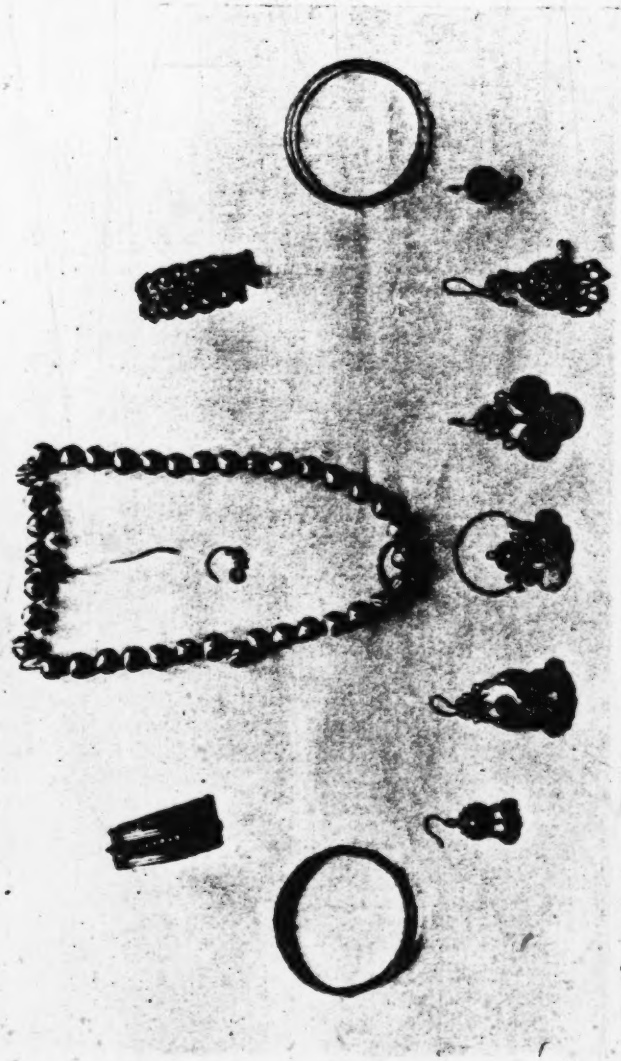

FIG. 18. WOMEN'S ORNAMENTS: NECKLACE, NOSE-RING, METAL BRACELETS, GLASS BANGLES, AND EARRINGS

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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [1882] 301

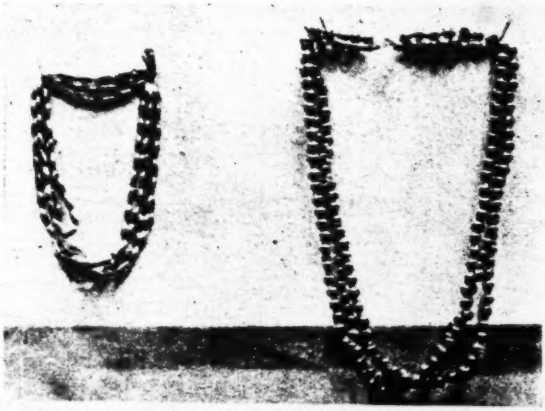

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[1765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 [1789] [1987]

[1] See Chapter XI.

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765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

000 Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

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PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!" 304

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black. 304

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree 304 463 531

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304 463 531 under which he squats, so that his clients can choose whatever pattern or patterns they prefer. Some are very elaborate, and must involve considerable suffering on the part of the person who is tattooed with them. Many of the patterns are conventional designs, and I am assured that they have no special meaning, but are chosen according to individual taste and fancy. One pattern is called *esh-shagareh* (the tree), and is the one usually chosen by both men and women to decorate the back of the right hand. So far as I have observed, this pattern when used by women differs slightly from that used by men. The drawing given here (Fig. 21) I made from the hand of a woman; the marks were tattooed on her hand when she was a young girl.

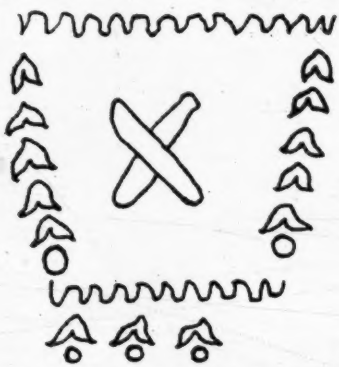

FIG. 21. TATTOO MARKS ON THE BACK OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT HAND AND ACROSS THE BACK OF THE WRIST

FIG. 22. TATTOO MARK FROM EDGE OF LOWER LIP TO BASE OF CHIN

304 531 The women are usually tattooed from the edge of the lower lip down to the base of the chin. The pattern shown in Fig. 22, copied by me from the same woman, is also called *esh-shagareh*. The tattoo on the back of the hand and wrist, as well as on the fingers and thumb, is said to make them strong.

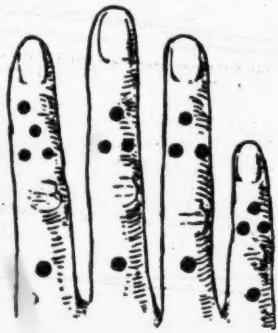

FIG. 23. TATTOO MARKS ON WOMAN'S FINGERS TO MAKE THEM STRONG

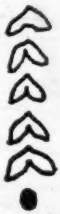

FIG. 24. TATTOO MARKS ON THUMB BELOW THE SECOND JOINT TO MAKE THE THUMB STRONG

304 A boy is often tattooed with a single dot on his chin and another near his right nostril; also most boys have three dots, thus ∴, tattooed on one arm, just above the wrist. Boys are tattooed in

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [946] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

F C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered.

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out.

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt,

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut [155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[412]

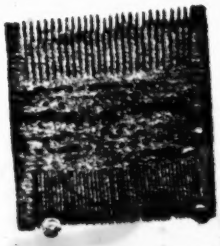

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as
832 well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one
302 of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals
589 the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it
302 is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

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again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [806]

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307 form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

[765] After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

[291]

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

[593] [832]

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharkīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

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291 301 554 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my informant, they represent the money given to the bride before her marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 554 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 301 765 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative, but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

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CHAPTER IV

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

CHILDREN occupy a very important place in Egyptian society, as will be seen in Chapter VI, which is concerned with the numerous methods employed by women to ensure their producing offspring. 842

When a woman becomes pregnant she often hangs up in various rooms in her house pictures of legendary persons who are renowned not only for physical beauty, but also for their loving and gentle disposition. The expectant mother believes that if she constantly looks at such pictures the child to be born will resemble them in face and character. Anything and everything that she gazes at for any length of time is believed by her to affect her unborn child.[1] The first year that I visited Egypt I was on more than one occasion somewhat embarrassed by the numbers of women who would sit or stand around me when I happened to be visiting a village, staring at me without moving their eyes from my face. I was afterward told by my servant, who always accompanied me and assisted me greatly in my work, that these women were all expectant mothers and desired to have babies resembling me in face—hence the rigid stares! Since then I have frequently been gazed at in this manner, but have now quite lost my first feelings of embarrassment. 843 789

"Ah," said one woman when thus engaged in studying my features, "if I had a girl like her I could marry her for a thousand pounds!"

"Look well, O girl," replied my servant, "and if you are in a state of yearning you may have one like her!"

For a similar reason most women in this condition will endeavour to avoid ugly or unpleasant sights or people, fearing that their unborn infants may be thereby adversely affected. If a pregnant woman should see a dead person, man, woman, or child of either sex, and not take the necessary precautions, it is the generally 843

[1] This is also a common belief in England.

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843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn iblīz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

844 463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

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If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

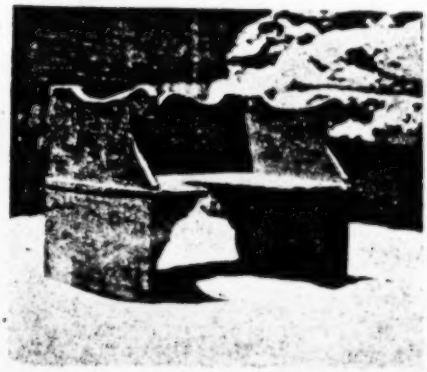

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

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845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
779 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[415]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥṣaf*.

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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would [794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the [796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she
suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must w[illegible] his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'c[illegible]' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

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the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

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F 843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another
821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God
761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts
F thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has
846 given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven
F days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was
853 last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives
761 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens,
895 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die.
853 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.
825

F Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly
789 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what-
853 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men
778 have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a
846 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must
262 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of
789 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do
853 this she will have no milk.

E When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant,
846 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her
854 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of
796 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls
799 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest
789

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *ʿafārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *ʿafrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *ʿafārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
704 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
704 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
761 been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

[776 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
704] widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
704 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [162]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* 776
or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774
ḳarīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775]
ḳarīneh, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791]
go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789
the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
779 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789 who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
779 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARÎNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
779 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).

The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
789 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being
843 done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. "In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

[539]

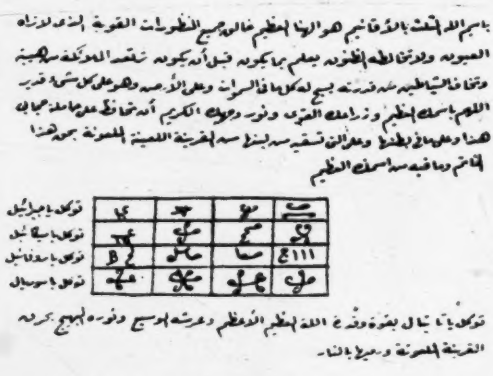

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told: "Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
779 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother) but

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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 774
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 774
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787]
the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [415]
anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312]
jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said [761]
they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
996 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
994 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

[854]
[291]
[192]

854

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[753] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

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854 for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a
852 metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The
[M7] water is called *moiyet el-malāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels
[M4] meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

[291]

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

[M76]

852 On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

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of rings. On one of the baskets is placed a large winnowing sieve, 852 in which the child sleeps all night. When the midwife comes on the following morning, and both mother and child have been washed, some of the grains from one of the baskets are put in the sieve, the baby also being placed in it. The midwife then tosses and shakes the baby in the sieve, its mother meanwhile banging the edge of the metal basin with a tin mug. The striking of the basin by the mother is not, I believe, always done, but on one occasion when I was present at this ceremony the mother acted in this way. The tossing and shaking of the child in the sieve is repeated several times, after which the grains are returned to the basket. The midwife now takes the child in her arms, and covers it with a cloth of white cotton on which are placed some of the grains from one of the baskets. Having first carried the child into all the rooms on the ground floor, she then goes outside the house, sprinkling some of the grains wherever she walks, and repeating "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet") over and over again during the whole of her perambulation.

[789]

FIG. 37. UMBILICAL CORD IN COTTON WRAPPING, AND OTHER CHARMS SUSPENDED FROM IT

Left to right: twisted iron wire, string of seven grains of beans, and bag containing samples of the seven ingredients of one of the baskets.

The child is now taken back into the mother's room, and the midwife blackens its eyes with *koḥl*, a bottle of which she has brought with her. She dips a feather into the *koḥl*, and, having opened the child's eyes, passes the feather across each of them in turn. After thus painting the eyes she fastens round the child's neck the cotton case containing a piece of the umbilical cord, to which are 852 302 789

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

789 In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

[463] [291] [285]

789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put
852 into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

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527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and [782] when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of [465] the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A [789] good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a con- [554] siderable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [072] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1]. *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 264.

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forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

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C
[1008]

F
C
[965]

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

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In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

302 852 778 I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

E 302 852 778 As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

E [431] F [535 152]

000 I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [118] F [761]

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F C 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

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I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

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CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

584 I HAVE already stated that girls at a very early age dress themselves up in order to attract attention to themselves and so secure a husband. These children are often married to quite [582] elderly men, old enough to be their fathers or even their grandfathers. Such disparity in age is most unsuitable, and frequently leads to great unhappiness. In their attempts to obtain husbands the girls are aided and abetted by their mothers, who resort to magic and trickery of all sorts to secure a desirable man. The two following incidents, which occurred while I was in Egypt in 1926, illustrate a device often employed by women who want to catch a man, either for themselves or for one of their daughters.

832 A certain woman living in a village in Middle Egypt was walking out one day when her glance fell on a young man (Fig. 41) to whom she took a great fancy, and who, she thought, would make an excellent husband for her daughter. She therefore went to a magi- [789] cian and begged him to write a charm, which she buried under the threshold of her house. She then persuaded one of her male relatives to bring the young man to her house on the pretext that he desired his company when he went thither on some business matter. The young man acceded to this request, and the elder man, who knew the exact spot where the charm was buried, stood at the door of the woman's house in such a position that his companion, when he entered, must step over the buried charm. The girl made some coffee for the two visitors, and either brought it in herself or allowed the young man to get a glimpse of her in some other way. The youth then went home, and on the way there began to think of the girl whom he had seen, and to desire her as his wife. By the time he reached home he wanted her still more, and by the evening was quite mad about her, refusing to eat or sleep, and saying that he must have the girl as his wife. I saw him several times after this, and he was in a most forlorn and love-sick condition, imploring me to intercede with his father, who was not

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inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been 832
married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired.

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is betrothed, pay a large sum of money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

584

[142] [241]

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young un- 581
married girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the 832
house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed

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832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [582] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is 584 prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 585 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she 492 is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

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similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [076] F

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, C 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 585

and that the procession is accompanied by men carrying lanterns and candles. As they proceed the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*. The priest addresses the pair, but before he does so he takes a silken thread and passes it over the right shoulder of the bridegroom and under his left arm, where he ties the thread into a knot with a loop. After the address from the priest is over the bridegroom pays him a sum of money, and then the priest undoes the knotted thread. He then takes the two engagement rings which the bride and bridegroom gave each other at their betrothal and ties them together with a silken thread. After putting certain questions to the pair he returns them their rings, and each puts his or her ring on ; the bridegroom does not place the ring on the bride's finger.

E 585 537

After the service is over the priest invites anyone present who may wish to do so to speak. Perhaps one man may get up and deliver an oration, in which, in addition to various other complimentary remarks, he will probably compare the bride to the moon, and the bridegroom to the sun. Others will follow his example, and even women are permitted to speak on such occasions. The bridegroom then either himself thanks his friends for their kindly speeches or asks his father or his brother to do this for him.

E 585 292

Both bride and bridegroom wear new clothes on the occasion of their marriage, and they wear these garments for seven days after the wedding. When this period has elapsed these clothes are put away for several days, and then they can be worn at any time.

E 585 789

When the bride is on her way to the bridegroom's house her unmarried female friends who accompany her thither pinch her on one of her thighs. By doing this they believe that they also will soon get a husband. The bridegroom is pinched in the same way by his unmarried male friends, who hope that this will ensure each of them a bride. I am told that this is a common custom among the *fellāḥīn*.

On the morning after the marriage night the bridegroom when he goes out pulls a branch off a palm-tree, tears off all the leaves, and then cuts off a long length of the thicker end of the mid-rib as a stick. He then splits up one end of it several times, so that these split ends stand out slightly. With this split stick he strikes any of his unmarried male friends whom he happens to meet. Those whom he thus strikes will, it is believed, shortly marry too. This, according to my informant, is a very old custom which was formerly

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common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*. E 585 789

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story. E 586

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

F [842] F [241] [142] F 887 586

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably *younger than he is*, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791 832 [29] 431 152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

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789
842 On my first visit to Egypt in 1920, soon after my arrival at my brother's camp on the high-desert slope in Asyūṭ Province, a certain number of childless women sent appealing messages to me, asking if I would let them have one of the bones which were scattered in great numbers about the ancient burial site on which the camp was situated. Their object was to step or jump over the bone in order to ensure, as they believed, the production of offspring. I acceded to their request, and then suddenly thought of my pendants, which I had unfortunately forgotten to bring out to Egypt with me. However, I sent a message to the women to say that I had written to England requesting that certain very potent charms that I possessed should be sent to me as soon as possible.

[532]

FIG. 44. THE FOUR CHARMS OVER WHICH THE WOMEN STEP

When the parcel arrived I caused the fact to be known in the various villages of the district, at the same time intimating that I should be glad to see any of the women who wished to make use of them. From then onward women, sometimes as many as ten at a time, would come from various villages in the district, crossing the lower desert, and climbing up to our camp on the hills which rose into the upper desert. They were usually accompanied by a middle-aged man or woman, sometimes by both. The man was not present at the ceremony, but the woman chaperon stayed with them all the time.

The ritual was as follows. The women first repaired to one of the ancient decorated tomb-chapels, conducted thither by one of our servants, who had the key. On entering they each stepped seven times backward and forward over what they supposed to be the mouth of the shaft admitting to the subterranean burial chamber. When this performance was over they returned to the undecorated tomb-chapel in which I lived. Here I produced the charms, two of which were placed on the ground at a time. Then each woman

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. 789
Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a 842
mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women 842
will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing 778
that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women 789
sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this [775]
belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's 842
tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to 782
make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain 782

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
778 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
764 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
715 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

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FERTILITY RITES

F 842 775

a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward sevén times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation.

B 842 775 171

A very similar practice has been noticed among the Bangalas, a tribe to the north of the Congo. On one occasion a woman of this tribe was seen to be digging a hole in a public road. Her husband explained to a Belgian officer who was present that his wife wished to become a mother, and begged that she might be left unmolested, promising, on his part, to mend the road afterward. The woman continued to dig till she had unearthed the skeleton of her dead child, which she affectionately embraced, begging it at the same time to enter her body to be reborn.[1] In this case we see a very similar rite, accompanied by the same belief, as in modern Egypt.

E 842 766

Among the Copts, if a child dies while it is a baby and after it has been baptized the body is enclosed in a coffin. However, the mother of the child instructs the men who take it to be buried in the graveyard (generally near a monastery) that they are to remove the body from the coffin and inter the latter only in the vault. The body of the child is then buried in the sand near the vault, and sand is placed under its armpits and its chin and on its thighs. This, the mother believes, will ensure her having another child. It seems as if the Copts have a belief similar to that of the Muslims mentioned above, and that the sand is used to keep the body from twisting and thereby preventing the mother from bearing another child.

Again, among the Copts, if a child dies before it is baptized it is placed naked in a *ḳādūs* (an earthenware jar, several of which are attached as water-wheels). This jar is buried under the floor of one of the rooms in the house, it does not matter which, and is covered again with the mud of which the floors are usually made in the houses of the *felláḥīn*. This is believed to ensure the mother having another child.

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her

[1] Quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, "Adonis, Attis, and Osiris," 3rd edition, vol. i, p. 92.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291] [192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[116] [114] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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FERTILITY RITES

Not long ago I was fortunate enough to witness the following curious performance to which a Coptic woman had recourse; she had been married for some time, but had had no children. 841 789

A secluded spot behind the house was selected, and a blanket spread on the ground for the woman to lie upon. Such a performance would usually take place inside the house, but, as the light indoors was not strong enough for photography, the woman consented to it taking place outside. She lay down upon the blanket on her back. Her clothes were then drawn up to above her waist, and the lower part of her body was covered by a rug, her abdomen being thus left exposed. Some flour was put into a small bowl and mixed with water into a firm paste. One of the two women who officiated took the paste and formed it into a flat, round cake, which she then placed on the recumbent woman's stomach, just over the navel. Meanwhile, the second woman selected a head of maize (*dura*) from which the grain had been removed and placed it upright in the centre of the cake, where it was held in position by the first woman. Her companion now struck a match and lighted the head of maize, which they called a 'candle' (Fig. 45). They held this lighted 'candle' in position while they placed over it a pottery jar, pressing this well into the cake. In this way the jar remained upright without further support, and it was left in this position for about one minute (Fig. 46). The Coptic woman called out more than once for the jar to be removed, but her two friends urged her to be patient and to keep the jar on her stomach a little longer. [415]

FIG. 46. FERTILITY RITE WITH JAR

[291] [415]

One of the women then got up from the ground where she had

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C 842 789

been sitting and proceeded to lift the jar from off the woman's stomach. It took a very strong and somewhat lengthy pull to do this, and as it was finally removed there was a resounding pop, like an explosion. It was explained to me that one possible reason for the woman not having conceived was that she had "wind in her stomach." The noise caused by the removal of the jar was this wind coming away, as they supposed, from the stomach through the navel. The performance was repeated two or three times, and on each occasion when the jar was pulled away the noise was very loud, and the two attendant women remarked on how much wind the patient had in her stomach. As I have said, the woman who removed the jar had to exercise her full strength to get it away, and this part of the performance must have caused the patient a good deal of discomfort, if not actual pain, for her stomach was dragged up with the jar in the effort to remove it, the suction, of course, being caused by the vacuum created by placing the jar over the lighted 'candle.' I was sorry to hear, when making inquiries later on, that the operation had failed to produce the desired effect!

C [827]

F [391]

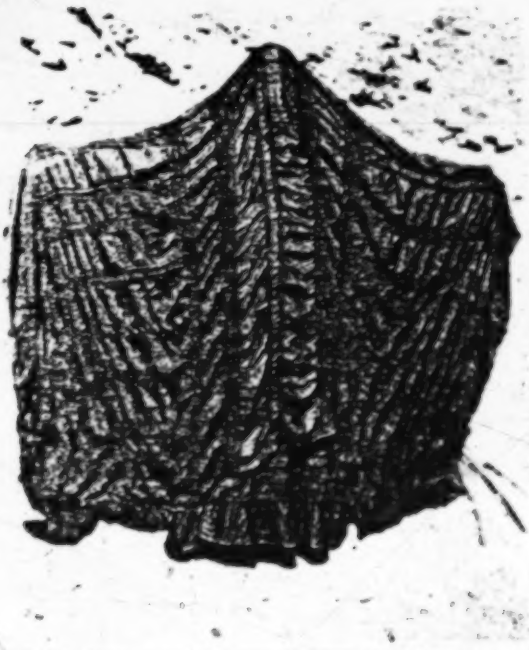

FIG. 47. WOMAN WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN A TŌB

F 842 789

Childless women frequently have recourse to this fertility rite, at any rate in some parts of Egypt. I do not yet know if it is a widely

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spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion. 842 789

Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her. 842 789 291

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of 842 789 123

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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

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Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity. 778 789 [231] 853

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted. [191] 789 [825] 842

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness. [824]

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose. 574 842 [789]

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive. 842 278 [754]

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

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842 If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to
789 conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers
[841] them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

840 A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives
754 a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on
789 the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell
[791] on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency
[758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are em-
842 ployed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-
164 rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been
163 pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor,
515 venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite
careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief
associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is
a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, per-
haps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts
of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing
near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for
a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs
drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then
washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a
sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*,
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [767]
remains of the soap used in the washing. [893]

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly
after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning
or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [751]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor
and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment
the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of pro-
fessional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven
times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs,
usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This
perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present
day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with [192] the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [151]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 136, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of
775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If
782 this is not done the *rūḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot
805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *'afrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *'afrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

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764 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose
152 lamentations are the loudest of all.
[163] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar
764 made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the
779 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137]
[133]
[764]

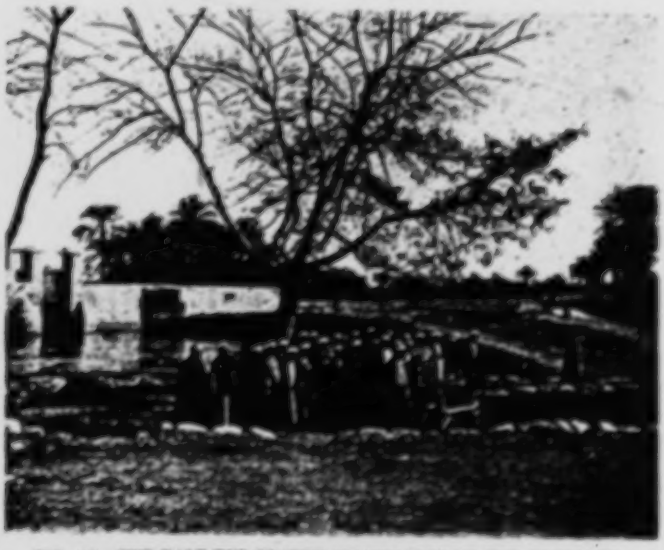

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their
152 wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites
[173] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached. 764 152 [788]

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion. 764 775 787 [976]

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow. 774 775

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them- 764

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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
797 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

 PIT.

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to 775
her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the 682
friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others 769
on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations 769
and friends. The ceremony is called *et-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the [823]
desert. On the day of *et-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. 769
From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were [492]
walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fukahâ* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorân by [793]
the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
260 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
188 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

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FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical. 769 735 175 292 152

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on 769 292 152

[735]

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread- 769 735 431

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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769 rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who
935 appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began
again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at
431 the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets
[978] with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

769 In another part of Egypt where I have attended this cere-
775 mony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3. [2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadâ*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of E [152] women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time [302] piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on E the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite [123] of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared [515] the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in E the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured hand- [292] kerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they E would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the [302] women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said "No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

"*Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ*" ("Better, much better"), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi!*" ("O my brother, my brother!").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the dancing women from outside), and the men had some difficulty in getting past them into the room again and closing the door. The sister got up and rushed toward the door leading into the room where her dead brother lay, crying out to him, "*Ta'āla, ta'āla!*" ("Come, come!"), the mourning women at the same time uttering their piercing cries of grief, so that the din was deafening. As the men came out with the coffin, which now contained the body, the pandemonium became greater than ever

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FIG. 55. COPTIC FUNERAL: COFFIN ON CAMEL'S BACK

The women shrieked, and the sister tore off her veil (at other times considered a most immodest thing to do), wrenched her dress open at the throat, and rent her garments to such a degree that her female companions, for decency's sake, were obliged to restrain her. The coffin was then placed on the ground, and the women seated themselves round it. They hammered with their fists on the lid, shrieking to the dead man, and flinging their arms wildly about in the air. The sister so completely lost her self-control that I urged the men to advance and take up the coffin. After some difficulty they managed to hoist it up on to their shoulders, and, followed by a crowd of screaming women, at last got out of the house. The coffin was placed on the back of a donkey, though a camel is more often used (see Fig. 55), and the procession set off for the Coptic monastery situated in the desert a few miles away.

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

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The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arîf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

E [537]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 764 794 788 533 531 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 252 775 352 780 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 775 793 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

E [293] [297] [778]

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *'arīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

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502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins. 628 152 689

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities. 537 608 624

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[411] [491]

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced. [411]

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[627] [682] One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced [197] into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still [811] continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

[509]

FIG. 50.—CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

[811] nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

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and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabût* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. 312 685 941

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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criminals sometimes escape punishment, in spite of the skill and patience displayed by many of the officials in unravelling the mass of conflicting evidence. To this skill and patience I can myself testify, and also to the obstinate refusal of witnesses to give any incriminating evidence, for I have been present over and over again at criminal investigations.

However, we must not pass too harsh a judgment on the attempts of the villagers to frustrate the aims of justice. Even in England people would hesitate to assist the law if it were known that to give evidence against even the most depraved criminal meant almost certain death at the hands of the avengers. Foreigners who have little or no knowledge of the customs prevailing among the peasants are inclined to be too severe in their criticism of the Egyptian officials when they fail to obtain sufficient evidence to convict almost undoubted criminals. But English officials who have lived in the provinces of Egypt and in close contact with the people realize how difficult a matter this is. To my mind the wonder is not the number of crimes that go unpunished for lack of evidence, but the number of criminals whose crimes are detected and who are brought to justice.

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CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIES. THE VILLAGE MARKET

ONE of the commonest industries in Egypt is pottery-making, and the methods employed are usually very simple. There are, roughly speaking, two kinds of pottery—hand-made and wheel-turned. When no wheel is employed the potters may be men or women, but the wheel is used only by men. I shall deal with this industry at some length, for, despite their importance for archæology, the methods employed by potters in modern Egypt have hitherto received little attention from archæologists. Several of these, however, have recently told me that my researches in this subject will form a valuable addition to the study of ceramic art, and will throw light on the different methods of pottery-making employed in much earlier times, not only in Egypt itself, but in other parts of the Mediterranean area also. 323

The processes in the manufacture of pots vary in different parts of Egypt, and I will endeavour to give as detailed a description as possible of those which I have studied in Fayūm, Minia, Asyūṭ, and Ḳena Provinces.

In one village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large pottery-making establishment in which both men and women are employed, and where hand-made as well as wheel-turned pots are manufactured. The potters carry on their art in charming surroundings, the scene of their labours being a beautiful palm-grove, the trees of which afford them a welcome shade.

The clay used for the pots is obtained in the neighbourhood, and is prepared for use by a woman. It is put in a hollow in the ground, and a certain amount of finely chopped chaff is mixed with it, as well as sufficient water to make it of the proper consistency. One of the women then kneads this preparation with her feet until it is thoroughly mixed. 317 323 462

In this particular locality only women make the hand-made pots, and the process is as follows. When the clay is ready for use one of the potters forms portions of it into flat, round cakes, from two 323 462

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323 462 to three inches thick. Another woman takes one of these cakes and places it on an upturned pot with rounded base which stands in a shallow pan filled with chaff. The upturned pot can be turned round and round in the pan at the will of the potter. The cake of clay is moulded over the base of the upturned pot, and the potter pats and smooths it into shape with one hand and with a potsherd held in the other hand. When this part of the process is completed she removes the clay, now formed into a hemispherical shape, and places it on the ground beside her. She goes on dealing

[415]

FIG. 60. SMOOTHING OVER THE JOIN IN POT-MAKING

with the cakes of clay in this way until she has a number of such shapes prepared. She then takes two of these, and bends the edges of both inward, moistening them, as she does so, with water from a bowl placed near her. The two shapes are now put together, rim to rim, the woman again moistening her hand with water to effect the join, which she first smooths over with her hand and then with a potsherd or a curved piece of wood[1] (Fig. 60).

The vessel is now a perfect sphere. The opening is cut with the woman's thumbnail (Fig. 61). She keeps her hand steady with the thumb in position, and turns the pot round rapidly as it rests on the ground, or in the pan, thus making a perfectly circular

[1] See below, p. 141, footnote.

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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziydr* (singular *zir*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

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sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage, which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63).

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FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

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thick rim, is now put to sun-bake again, the rope being still left coiled round the lower half. No rope is put round the upper part, but large nicks are impressed in the clay with the thumbnail just below the rim. 393

After the sun-baking is completed the vessels are placed in a kiln to be fired, the cords being previously removed (Fig. 64), though the impress made by the cord remains on the pot even after baking.

FIG. 63. COILING THE FLAT SAUSAGE OF CLAY ROUND THE LUMP OF CLAY ALREADY ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL

[091]

A pattern similar to that effected by the rope is employed for the decoration of pots in many countries; but this practice of strengthening and supporting the weakest part of the pot, or the part which receives the greatest pressure, by coiling rope round it probably suggested this decoration in the first instance. When such a practice has died out, possibly owing to greater skill achieved by the potters, the pattern originally made by the impress of the cord upon the pot is imitated for purely decorative purposes.[1] With the Egyptian potters the use of the cord is, as I have already stated, simply to support the thicker and heavier part of the *sîr* while sun-baking, and the impress left on the vessel does not seem to have any æsthetic value attached to it.

[1] I am indebted to Mr Henry Balfour, Curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, for this suggestion.

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323 Smaller vessels, such as the *ḳulleh* (see below, Fig. 79), are also made on the wheel, these being formed out of a single lump of clay. The potter, from long experience, knows exactly how large the lump must be for the formation of each vessel.

323 415 Near another village in Asyūṭ Province I saw the three following processes employed in the manufacture of a single pot. The vessels being made were large and globular in shape, and three people, a

[415]

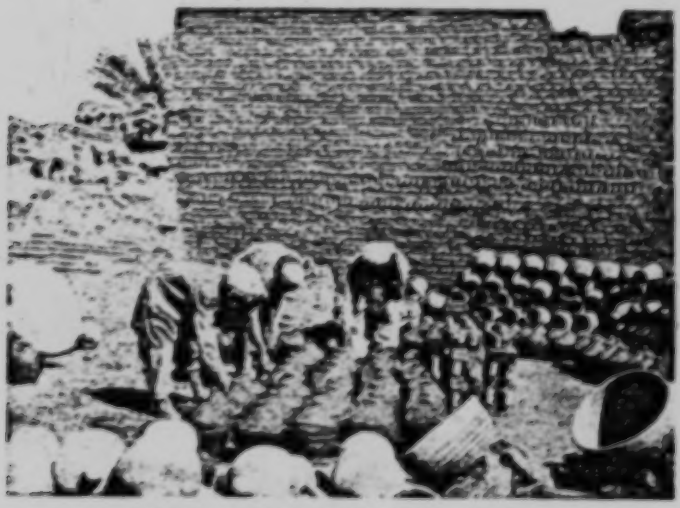

FIG. 64. REMOVING THE CORDS FROM THE POTS BEFORE PLACING THEM IN THE OVEN

woman and two men, were each responsible for one process, besides a fourth person, a man, who prepared and kneaded the clay. The clay was obtained in the neighbourhood, and chaff only was mixed with it. There was a kiln near by for the firing of the vessels (Fig. 65).

323 The first part of the pot was made by the woman. She took a large lump of clay, placed it in a round, shallow hollow in the ground, previously prepared and made very smooth, and then pounded the clay into the shape of this mould by means of an object, rather like a cottage loaf in appearance (Fig. 66), made of hard baked clay. By this means the base of the pot was constructed. She then took a potsherd, and with it and the other hand

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drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 303
thick sides.

Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the

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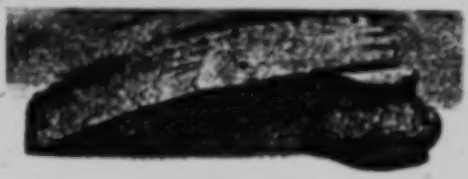
FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

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[13]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

303 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*ḥalālīṣ*, singular *ḥallāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ḥallāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL.

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

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FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

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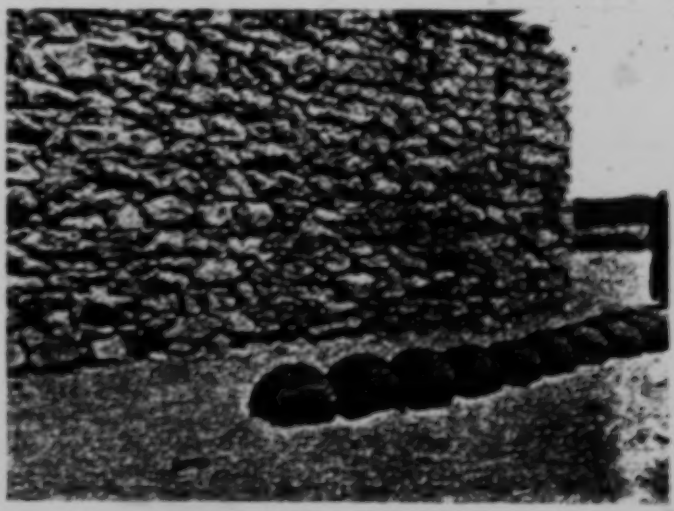
should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip [531] and painted with simple designs.

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought 323 in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, [317] soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *ṭafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are

[291]

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The [153] [386] paint, which is made of a material called *mughreh* (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freeh[illegible], and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work f[illegible]

The pots are n[illegible] r[illegible]dy for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready f[illegible] them, but they can be put on one side for a short time withou[illegible] any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

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FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

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Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

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FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

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On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

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On another pottery-making site in Fayūm Province which I visited large *ziyār* and pans, as well as *ḳulal* (see p. 151) and other small vessels, are made. Both hand- and wheel-made methods are employed here. The clay used in the manufacture of the larger vessels is obtained from Kīmān Fāris. This clay is soaked in water till it is of the right consistency, then *mūṣ* is mixed with it and well kneaded. The words *mūṣ* and *tibn* both mean finely chopped straw, but the former is so finely chopped that it is more like a powder. This mixture is left to soak for one day in a large hollow in the ground. It is then removed and left piled up in a heap for four days before it is ready for use. Each potter takes a large quantity of this prepared clay and places it conveniently near the spot where he is working, keeping it covered with sacking to prevent further evaporation.

FIG. 76. MAN MAKING TILES

The *ziyār* and large pans are made on the wheel, the former in the manner described earlier in this chapter; they are, however, decorated with simple designs on the upper half of the vessel. This decoration is done with the aid of an implement called a *garūt* (see p. 152, Fig. 80), which consists of a thin, flat piece of iron bent at a right angle at the top.

For making the pans the process is as follows. The revolving table is covered with a thin layer of clay, and on this a thick pillar

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

[142]
[415]

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

[379]

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INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

The custom of binding the cord just below the rims of the larger pans may have been also practised in former times when making the upper part of a *zīr*. As I stated earlier in the chapter, the potter usually makes incised marks with his thumbnail just below the rim of a *zīr*, the marks roughly resembling those made by the impress of the cord. This impress may have suggested a pattern, which the conservative mind of the potter demanded should always appear on that portion of the pot, even when the cord was no longer wound round it. Thus the marks made round the base of the rim by the thumbnail may be an imitation of somewhat similar markings left by a cord bound round this part of the *zīr* in earlier times.

FIG. 78. PANS BOUND WITH CORDS DRYING IN THE SUN

Smaller vessels, such as *ḳulal* (singular *ḳulleh*) (Fig. 79), are also made at this factory, and the clay used is obtained from Begīg, or Abgīg, as this village is sometimes called. *Ṭafl* (yellow clay) brought from Kīmān Fāris is mixed with the ordinary clay, the proper proportions being two-thirds ordinary clay to one-third *ṭafl*. These two materials are laid in water to soak till they are quite soft. They are then removed to a deep cavity dug in the ground, where a man kneads them with his feet. The mixture is taken out and piled in a heap, so that the superfluous moisture may evaporate.

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323 415 317 When it is ready for use each potter takes a quantity from this store, and places it in his hut, covering it, as usual, with sacking. A large lump of clay, worked up into a thick bolster shape, is taken and placed on the round table above the wheel. From this quantity of clay a number of *ḳulal* are made, each one, on completion, being cut off from the mass of clay by a string attached to a short stick (Fig. 80).

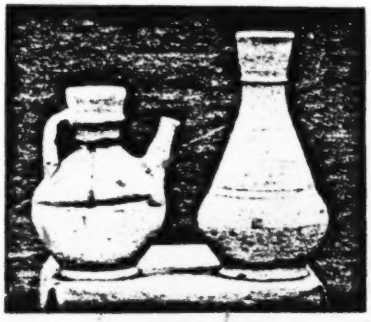

FIG. 79. TWO TYPES OF ḲULLEH OR WATER-BOTTLE

323 413 415 The potter begins by hollowing out the upper portion of the clay with his thumb, turning the wheel with his foot all the time, and slowly drawing up the sides of the vessel, which at the first stage resembles a bowl with thick sides. Then this is gradually shaped into a slender vessel by drawing up the sides, which, of course, become much thinner, until the *ḳulleh* is formed. The grooving

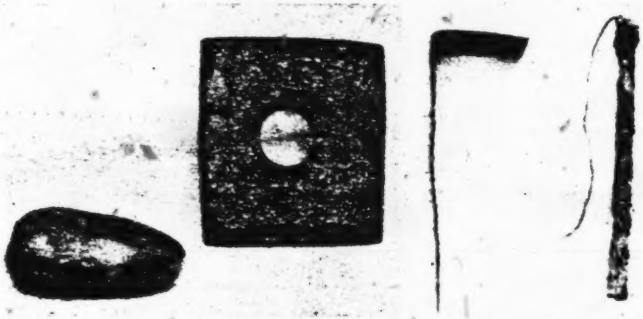

FIG. 80. POLISHING STONE, SĀDIF, GARŪT, AND STRING FOR CUTTING OFF FINISHED POTS

and final shaping is done with the aid of an implement called a *sādif*, a small, thin square of iron perforated in the centre (Fig. 80). The *sādif* is also used for incising the simple designs to be seen on the *ḳulal* made in this locality. The *ḳulleh* is then, as stated above, cut off by a string. The *ḳulal* are sun-baked for 323 one day, then put into the oven, the fire being kept alight for four

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hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [174]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

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251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

348 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses.

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture.

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the

clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

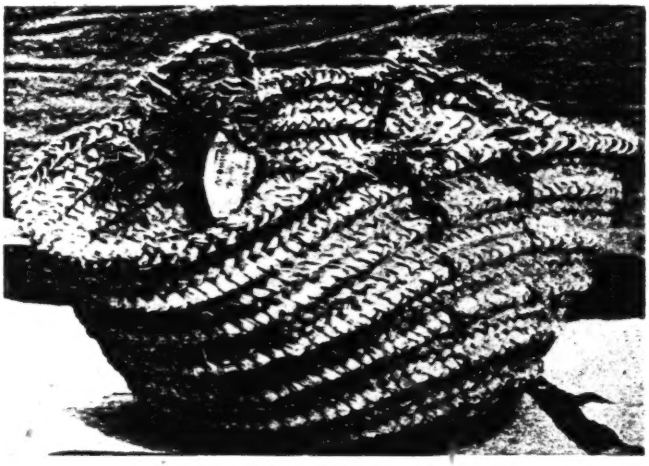

FIG. 83. A MAKṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

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know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not. 142

The *maḳṭaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow 285

[091] [516]

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

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Egyptian Oases MR12

F 285

same material, any ends that remain over being laced into the sides of the basket below either handle. The base of the basket on the outside is also sometimes reinforced with cord coils.

E 285

I should mention that a basket in my possession, from the oasis of el-Farāfreh, displays the same technique as the *maḳṭaf*. It is of very fine workmanship and the plaits are very small.

F 285 415 [460]

FIG. 85. BASKET-GRANARIES

A similar technique is employed in the making of basket-granaries. These are of great size, and are made, so I was told, exclusively by men and, so far as I know, in Fayūm Province only; I have never, as yet, come across them elsewhere. Numbers of them are sold at the weekly markets, and their size may be estimated by comparison with the height of the people standing near them in the photograph (Fig. 85). I have frequently seen these basket-granaries on the roofs of houses in Fayūm. Sometimes they are quite globular in shape and are entirely covered with clay, this being done, so one of my servants told me, to keep the wind and dust from penetrating through the interstices. Only when small pieces of clay have fallen off is the original structure of basket-work revealed. All the basket-granaries that I have seen are extremely well made, and are very strong.

F 285

Many baskets in use all over Egypt are made in the follow-

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ing way, the materials employed being taken from the palm-tree. 285

A number of the mid-ribs of palm-branches are split up lengthways, the leaves likewise. The basket-maker takes a certain number of the split mid-ribs, the number varying according to the required thickness of the coil, these forming a foundation. An iron needle, somewhat more slender than that used for the plaited baskets, is threaded with one of the split leaves, which is sewn over and over the foundation, almost, if not quite, concealing it. This type of basket is again built up spirally, each stitch being passed through the preceding coil (Figs. 86 and 87). Such baskets are made in a large variety of shapes, from flat, round trays to large receptacles with lids. They are often decorated with simple designs in colours, the leaves being, of course, dyed before they are sewn into the baskets. [531]

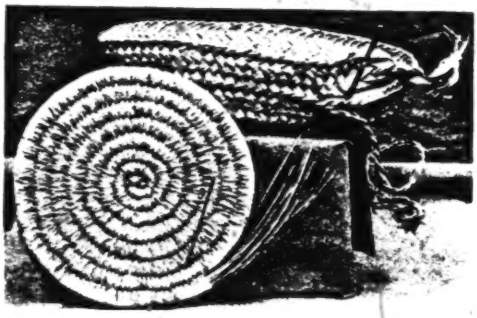

FIG. 86. UNFINISHED BASKETS, SHOWING METHODS OF WORKING

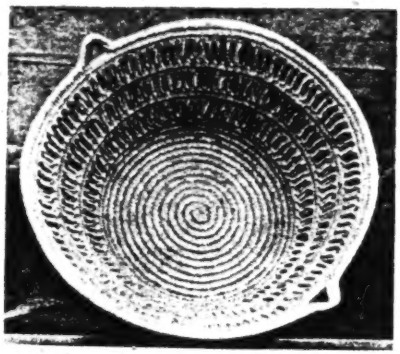

FIG. 87. BASKET WITH OPEN WAVY-LINE PATTERN

Some baskets, which I was told are made only in two small villages in Fayūm Province, have the base made in the way described above, while the sides show an open wavy-line pattern (Fig. 87). These also are made in a large variety of sizes and shapes, and are very attractive and decorative. The wavy line consists of mid-rib foundations closely bound round with the leaves. It must be remembered that both the leaves and the mid-ribs are fresh when the baskets are made, and are

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Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 085 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no

F [460]

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Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *ḳafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*līf*). The *līf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

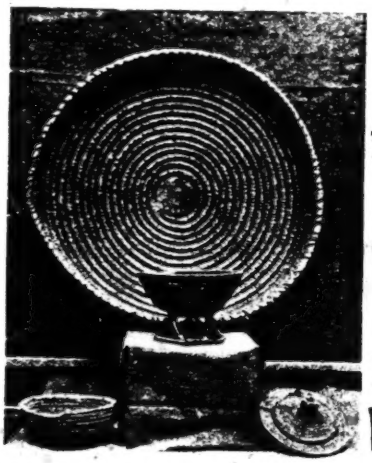

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

F 352
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S [285]

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 294

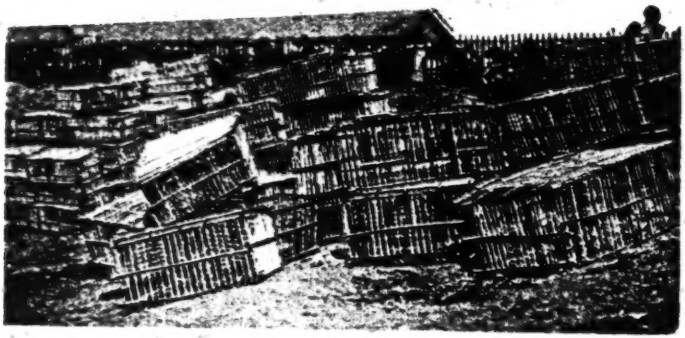

FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

F [285] [417]

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Upper Egypt

286 294 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

[283] [291] [142] [516] [857]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

000 Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

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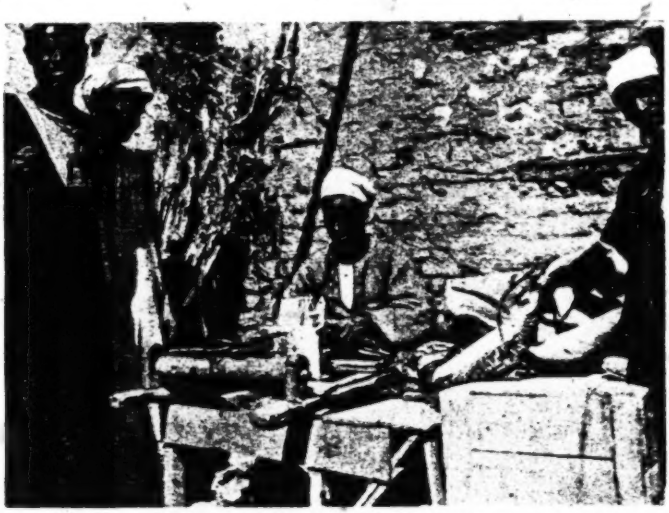
Spinning is, so far a I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462



[286] [299] [291] [14a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The ' fan ' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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252 oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning
462 in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done
[342] the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is

[286]
[291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North
252 of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a
[423] great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up
[252] through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

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goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *kafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

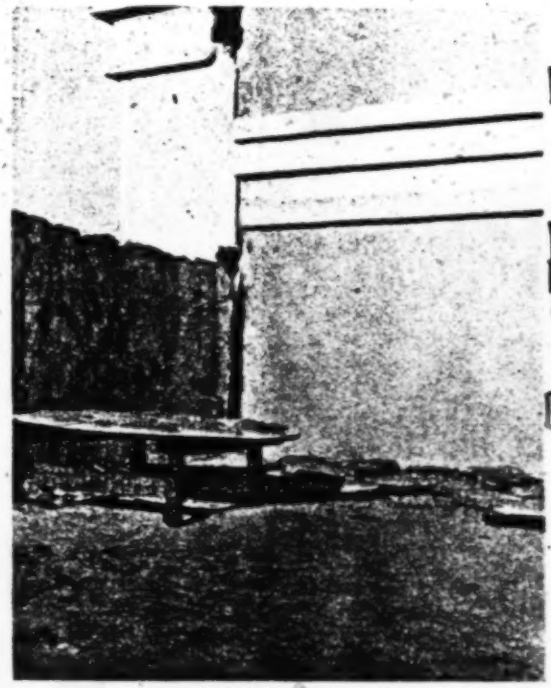

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

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Upper Egypt

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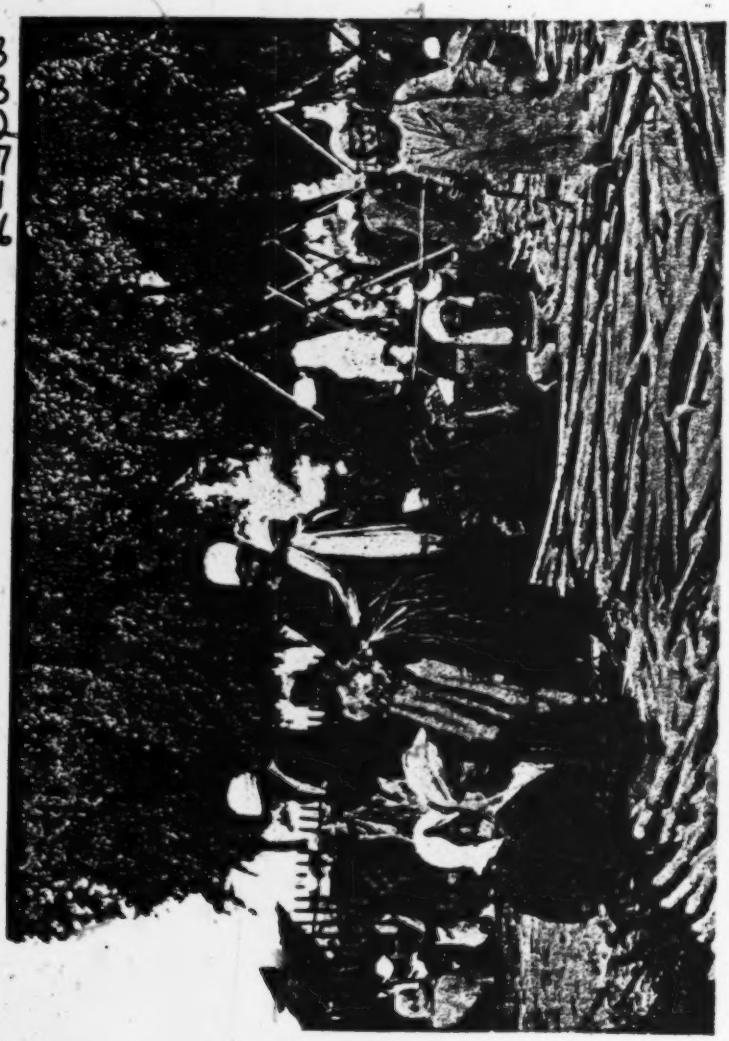

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads. 443 516 462 415 [482]

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be 443

[294] [291] [516]

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, [439] in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using [326] for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot 443 on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front [413] of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, de- [294] scribed in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the [534]

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

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443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312
from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [578]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [685]

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423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

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If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

> *Shawādīf,*
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

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'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

[241]
[312]

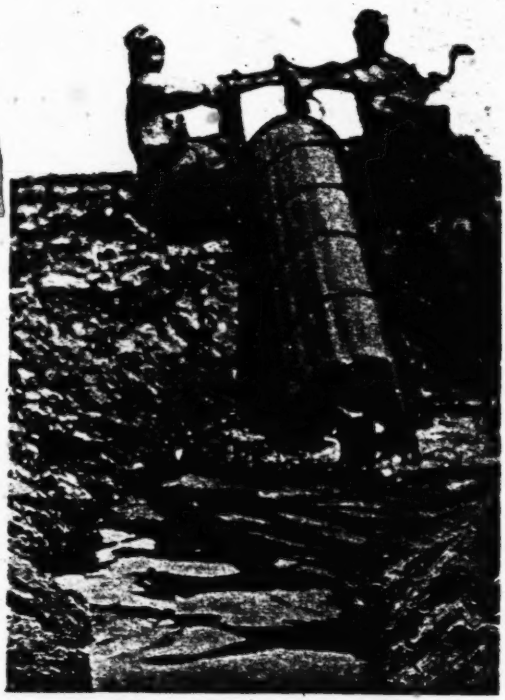

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FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

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The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [718] [965]

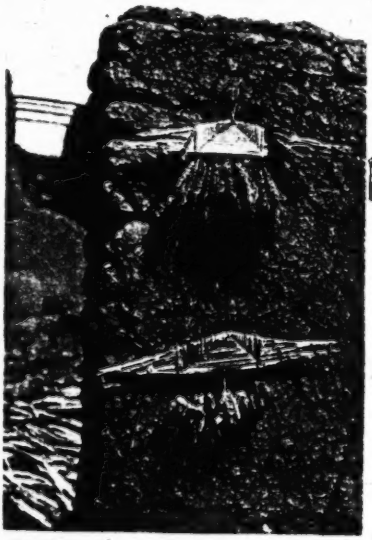

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

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243 strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields
465 carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only.
465 The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

[492]
[465]
[431]

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also
501 to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village
465 lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and
505 labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[992]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

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[492]
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[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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[412]
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[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

[Text continues on p. 180]

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FIG. 106. WINNOWING

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FIG. 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

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FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

[page 179]

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174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always,
[415] carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

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down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at 256

[462] [291] [241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

262 The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes. [164] [142]

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CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

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FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

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[291]

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *ʿafārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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791 Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one),
796 while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in
515 her person and in her clothes. If she
787 wears a single garment that is dirty
796 the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

[291]

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by
791 people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they
787 may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman
796 magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with. [2] See pp. 74 ff.

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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F 755 787 776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F C 791 778

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 791 787 789

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When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *ʿafrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

E [776]

E [776]

F C [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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454 It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over
754 the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Com-
788 passionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King
776 and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

111	12	15	121
18	7	4	8
5	19	109	2
3	5	40	19

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue. 754 789 158

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.
[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 754 789 158 [586] F 754 158

over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *'omdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

F [189]

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

F 692 754

I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

F 754 789

To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *ʿafrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *ʿafrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *ʿafrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

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E

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754 magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been
791 brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my
787 acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

F
C

754 The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend
789 is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and
780 to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such
776 a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

F
C
[779]

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

F
789 The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

F
754 If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

F
[779]

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

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787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291]
[342]
[352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them.
[152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754 If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761] dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

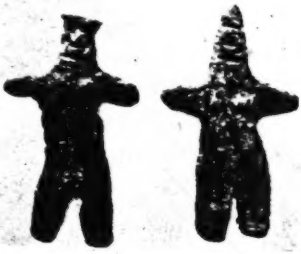

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754 corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753 clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755] figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754 in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171 many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776 people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787 among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

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787 776 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

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This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, 755 and she must not be miserable." 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of 787 its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, 755 the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the 787 time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, [263] are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the [789] neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift).

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told after- [776] ward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the pos- 787 sessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced 755 she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look.

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if [292] they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who [301] are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow- 787 students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had

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789 done so, but that he had dropped it inside his trunk. He went back to the school, searched his trunk carefully, and found the key, as the man had told him he would.

782 789 The *zār* is not necessarily followed by the ceremony called the *ṣulḥeh*; this takes place when a sheikh has troubled a man or woman for some time, and at last becomes appeased. It is a form of peace-making between the sheikh and the person he possesses. If anyone is possessed by more than one sheikh it is not necessary to kill more than one sheep at the *ṣulḥeh*; one victim appeases them all.

[301]

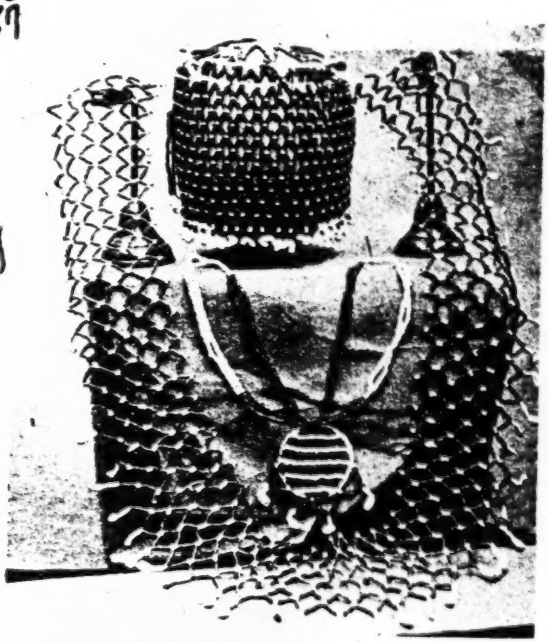

FIG. 120. ORNAMENTS—BELT, PENDANT, AND CAP—SOMETIMES WORN BY A WOMAN AT A ZĀR
The beads are green and white.

This belief, that it is possible to be thus possessed by a sheikh, is a very baneful one. The women who suppose themselves to be thus affected become exceedingly hysterical, and their husbands, for fear of the consequences, are put to great expense. The officials are quite rightly trying to put an end to the holding of the *zār*, but to suppress this ceremony completely will be difficult, as the beliefs associated with it are so deeply rooted in the peasants' minds.

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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

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juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear. 757 278

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt 757 755

[754]

278 755

FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

[1] Sulphate of zinc.

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F 278 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment. 757 759

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated. 755 789

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year. 796 796

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl. 757 278 262

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

[789] [755]

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced. [69]

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left 845 789

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845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation :

[539]

١٢	٢٢	١٤	١٢
١٠٢٠	١٠٢	١٠٨	١٢
٢١	٩٨	٧٥	٥٤
٩٨	٧٧	٦٥	٤٢

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

" Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil] ; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds : " Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache : " Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes " Hell is hot " ; on the second " Hell is cold " ; on the third " Hell is thirsty " ; and on the fourth " Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

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added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755
rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way. A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755
You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, 841
and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it [1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damrurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'" [2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776
Syriac. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account, 755

[1] Or cured.
[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

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F 776 755 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C 755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F 755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure. The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

F 252 251

F 755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

F [776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

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Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and 755
hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop.

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told 757
by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the 278
cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night.

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

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[789]

[855]

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

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753 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once
757 only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every
978 day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then
[764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

978 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried
757 in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a little longer.

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

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lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared.

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better.

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment!

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again.

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able

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to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

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The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded.

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims,

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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

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[957]
[99]

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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123

When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

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[957]

[Text continued on page 216]

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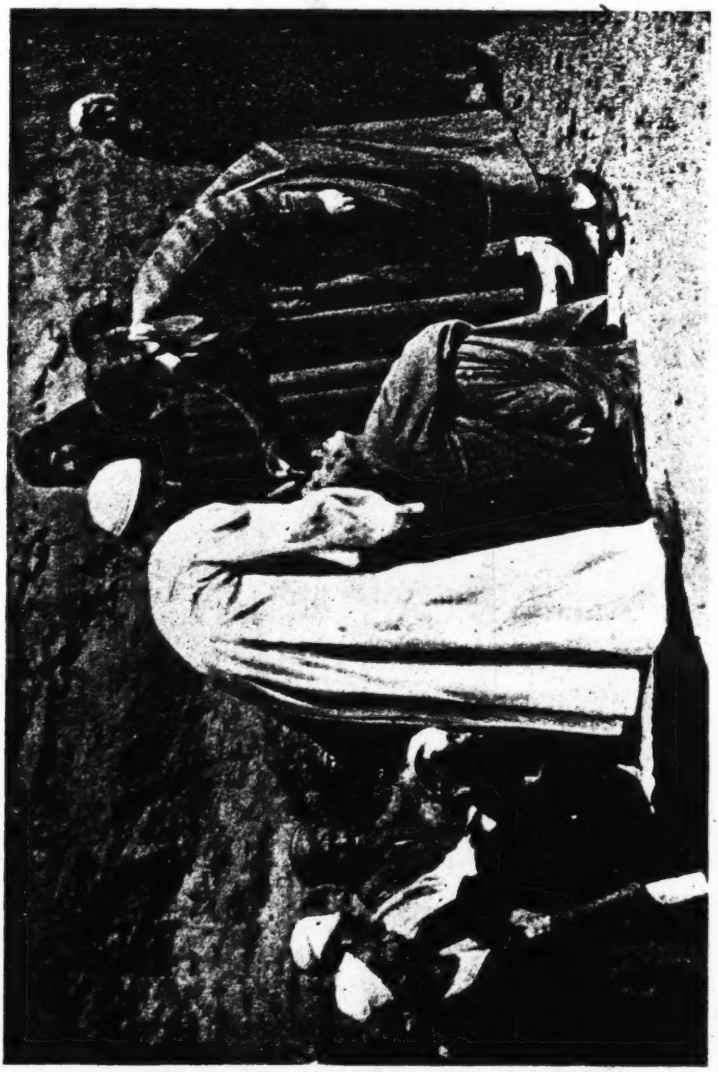

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FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

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case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

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time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and 515 dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practi- 855 cally all over the world. It has not even died out in modern Eng- [171] land, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are 753 adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

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the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

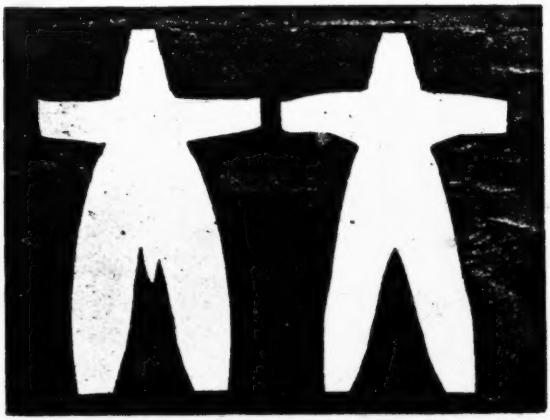

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of
753 my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

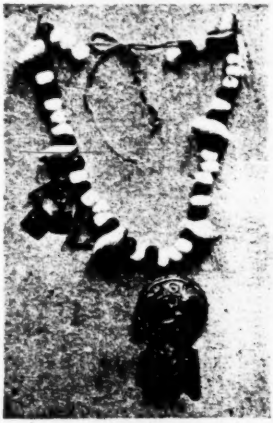

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 782 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, [776] and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḫarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

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Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

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832 754 If a man loves a woman and wants to marry her, and she has no affection for him, he asks a female friend to assist him in the following way. The friend visits the woman at a time when she is likely to be combing her hair. It is the custom for women to conceal all their hair-combings in the wall of one of the rooms, between the bricks. The friend notices where the woman puts her hair-combings, and, at the first opportunity, steals some of the hair when the owner is not present, and gives it to the man. He takes it to a magician, who measures the length of each hair by the span of his hand. The magician then writes a spell, and, going to a grave, puts the hair inside it, keeping the spot a secret, for no one must know where the hair is hidden. He puts the spell in his pocket, and on some pretext or other (he may ask her for a cup of coffee, for example) visits the house of the woman whose hair he has buried. While he is sitting in her house he will produce the paper on which he has written the spell, and tell her to wear it [789] under her arm, stating that it will afford her excellent protection in the event of anyone else writing a spell against her to prevent her marrying. He thus persuades her to accept his spell, hinting that it may also bring her a good husband. The woman, of course, has no idea that the magician is in league with the man who wants to marry her. She accordingly accepts the spell, hangs it round her neck, and, immediately becoming madly in love with the man who is in love with her, is, of course, only too glad to marry him! This is a very common practice in many parts of Egypt.

754 789 It is also the custom to protect houses from the evil eye, and various decorations are employed for this purpose. Sometimes a plate or saucer is plastered into the wall just above the main entrance, or pieces of old carving, picked up from an ancient rubbish-mound, may be let into the masonry round about the door. The horns of sheep and other animals are also hung over the doorway as a charm to protect the house from the evil eye. A 'bride of the corn,' as already stated,[1] is hung over the front door for the same purpose. Inside the house, on the walls of the living-rooms, I have seen painted designs which the owner told me were put there to keep off the evil eye. Indeed, the devices resorted to for protecting houses, fields, animals, and people of all ages against this dreaded power are multitudinous, and to describe all those that I am acquainted with would require an entire book.

[1] See p. 172.

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It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 994 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

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explosion is heard regularly every midnight, but no attention is now paid to it, as everybody has got quite accustomed to it.

Very shortly before my visit to the village in which the above-mentioned events took place a man was murdered in the adjacent fields, and not long after my arrival the following incident occurred. A woman was walking from this village to another not a great distance off, carrying bread and eggs to two of her grandsons who were at school there. She was alone, and as she approached the spot where the murder had taken place she saw a man who seemed to be ill, and who kept on crying, "*Akh! akh! Yā abūi! Yā abūi!*" ("Alas! alas! O my father! O my father!"). She went up to him and caught hold of his hands, raised him up, and then walked on with him, trying to comfort him. But after walking a short distance with her the man suddenly disappeared. She thereupon was terrified, and wept with fear. A man who was on his way to the same village overtook her, and, seeing her distress, asked her what was the matter. She told him about the stranger whom she had found and had tried to comfort and who had so mysteriously vanished. The man told her not to be frightened, that it was nothing, and that the apparition had appeared to him in the same way. It is generally supposed that this mysterious weeping apparition is the ghost (or *'afrīt*) of the man who had been murdered.

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CHAPTER XIV

'AFARĪT

AMONG the various supernatural beings who figure conspicuously in the life of Egyptian peasants are the *'afārīt* (singular *'afrīt*). This word is usually translated in dictionaries 'devils' or 'demons,' as distinct from the *ginn*, who are, properly speaking, the good spirits.[1] The peasants, however, so I have found, employ the words *ginn* and *'afārīt* indiscriminately, the latter word being more commonly used. The *'afārīt* are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intent who wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enter into anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfered with. 796

The *'afārīt* are supposed to live under the earth, where they form an organized society, with a king at their head. They haunt, so it is believed, springs and wells in uninhabited regions, such as the desert, and the narrow paths which wind about through the cultivation. There are other places, even on high roads, which are known by those versed in such matters to 'belong,' as they say, to *'afārīt*.

On a recent visit to Egypt a charming Rest-house with a good garden was generously placed at my disposal by the Egyptian Government (Fig. 134). It was my custom, when the weather was hot, to sit out in the garden every evening, where some of my village friends would join me, drink coffee, and have a chat. Among them was a small dealer in antiquities, who had a considerable knowledge of the folklore of the people. He told me one evening in the course of conversation that the road which ran past my house had, some years back, been much haunted by *'afārīt*, and that a portion of the [114]

[1] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 283 ff., and also his translation of *The Arabian Nights* (London, 1883), vol. i, pp. 26 f. (notes to Introduction).

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796 ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven [346] from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, [197] the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

[349] [137]

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [373] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessed ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 392 782

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F [791] [241]
F C 26A 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

F C [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

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when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *ʿafārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *ʿafrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *ʿafārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *ʿafrīteh* (feminine form of *ʿafrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

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scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791 with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789 tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755 of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753 by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123 and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593 one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152 evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776 him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152 come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158 mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756 they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755 of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

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756 returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which
755 the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told
[753] the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

755 Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left.
[787] When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *ʿafrīt*,
[796] speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean
[841] woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

755 When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman
796 became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *ʿafrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *ʿafrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[841] [1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776 F C 342 469

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. F C 842 755

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. F C 782 756 [152]

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. F C 782 776 755

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many F C 513 776

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E 513 796 [188] E 755 787 796 152 C 796 799 C [592] [142] C [198] [871] C 796

colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *ʿafārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *ʿafārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *ʿafārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *ʿafrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *ʿarīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

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boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

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F 782 392 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 622 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

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years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear. C 625 C 776 625 C [788]

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it. F 776 782

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured. F 776 808 513 784 685 C 808 513 782 755

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear. F 789

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must F [774] 775 825

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remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

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A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

462 312 [515] 165 175

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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 622 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 795 762 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

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with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building. 778 775 762

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

[792] [291]

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass 778 782

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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

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The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

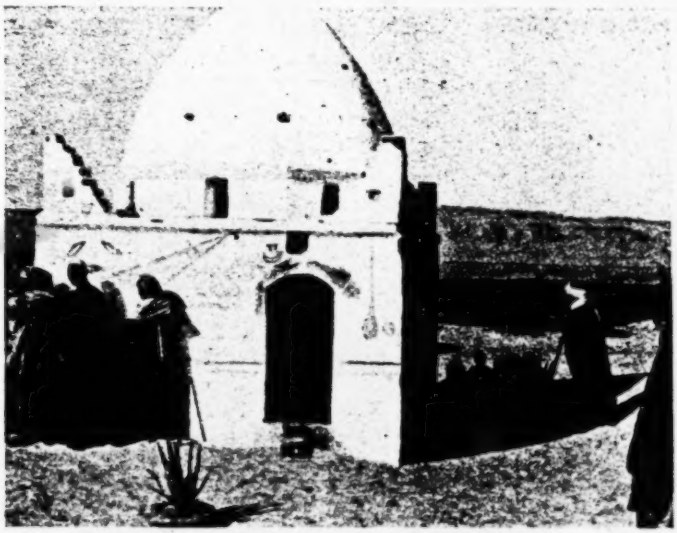

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

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964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

790 158 The sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f. [586]

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBÂRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu l-Laṭîf's later resting-place is built hold a *mûlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

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792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 787
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The
nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [321]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, 842
and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [069]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 787
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 776 688 of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

E 776 783 Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-'Azab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

E 783 It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *ḳibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

E [783]

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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COPTIC SAINTS

E 783

the shoes to the original owner. The shoes must always be those of a very poor *fellāḥ* who is in wretched circumstances, thus indicating the attitude of mind of the penitent man in the presence of the saint or sheikh whom he has wronged.

E 782 793

With regard to the offering of wax, it may be of interest to explain that the candles used in religious ceremonies in the Coptic church are always made by the priest himself or else by the servant who is responsible for the cleaning of the church.

2. Blackman E-5 (1920-1928) 1927
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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[194] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the
[182] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful
[194] on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[188] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of [171] Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

[794]
292
[798]

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
538

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

796
769

FIG. 142. MŪLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

[page 254]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested 796
audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a 769
woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat [538]
a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the [533]
amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite [536]
national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made
little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a
horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144). [529]

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see 796 769 533

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the 000

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

796 When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
788 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
769 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Coots MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

F [291] [342]

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The F 346 792

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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COPTS MR10

F C 396 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

F C [778]

F C [133]

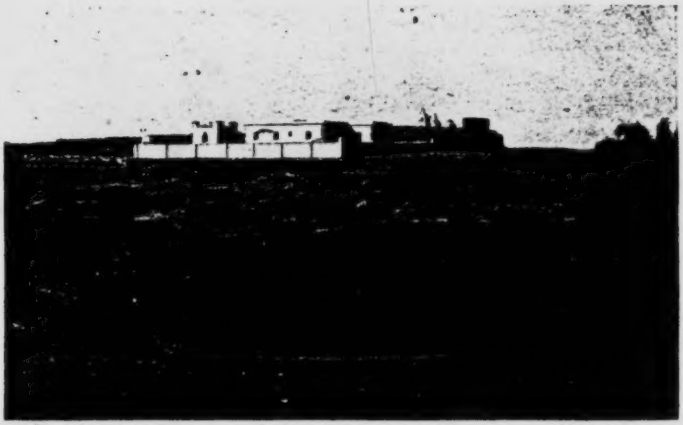

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

F 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [493] [527]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-'Īd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
735 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[769]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in
[782] her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son *recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering* on the first day of *el-ʿĪd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-ʿId eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*. 796 769

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before 796 789

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

[291] [231] [782]

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 796 789

thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

F [515] [823]

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

F 796 789 278

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

F C [291]

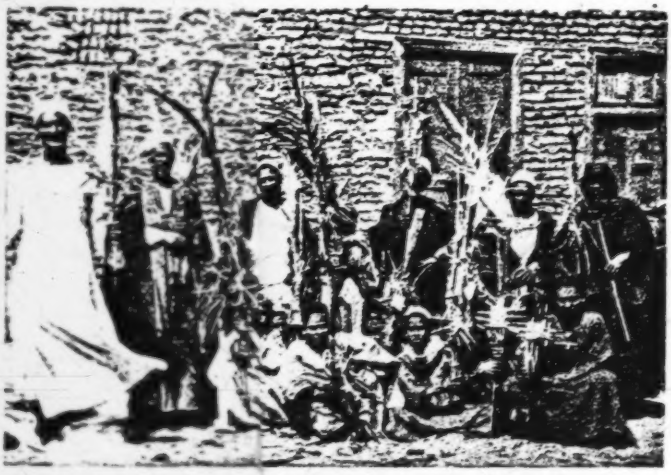

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

F [576]

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

C 796

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33.

[2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

to el-Lāhūn, in Fayūm Province. I photographed them in the monastery precincts after the service had taken place. C 796

The festival of the Epiphany is celebrated by the Copts on either January 18 or 19. On the previous evening the men usually bathe in the Nile, holy water from a church having been poured into the river first. In some places a priest comes to the house of a Copt bringing a supply of holy water with him and also a small silver cross. A number of prayers are recited, and the *Kyrie Eleison* is repeated forty-one times, these repetitions being counted by means of a Coptic rosary, which contains forty-one beads. The whole assembly is then sprinkled with the holy water. This is a substitute for the bathing in the Nile. C [778] [788]

On the following day, called *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, all the Copts repair to the cemeteries to visit the graves of their dead relatives. This visit is called *et-Ṭala'*, and many of the rites are similar to those observed by the Muslims at their *Ṭala'*. The following is an account of what I have myself witnessed at this ceremony, and is typical of all these celebrations in the country parts of Egypt. C 796 769

The first thing to catch the eye on arriving at the Coptic cemetery was a large group of women indulging in a curious dance close to some of the graves. It was very similar to the dance after a death described in the chapter on funerary customs, and consisted of a stamping, circular movement, the women being closely packed together the whole time C [535]

The cemetery was crowded, and visitors on camels, donkeys, or on foot were constantly arriving. Others, having paid their tribute to the dead, were departing, wending their way to the various villages in the cultivated area. All this time the wailing never ceased. It was, to my mind, the most pathetic sound I had ever heard. The monastery made a picturesque background for the whole scene. Moreover, its walls afforded a welcome shelter from the sun for the horses, donkeys, and camels that were tethered beneath them. C [152]

The groups of mourners varied in size, some being quite large and consisting of about twenty people, possibly more. Occasionally a woman could be seen wailing in solitary grief. I noticed one such woman talking to her dead husband through a small hole pierced at one end of the tomb. Coloured silk handkerchiefs, similar to those used at all the funerary ceremonies of the Muslims, were in evidence. The graves, especially those with no super- F C [286]

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796 769 286 structure, were covered for the occasion with a rug, called *kisweh*,[1] generally of a striped woven material, such as is often placed on the floor or on a *maṣṭabeh* for a guest to sit on. The women made no change in their dress for this occasion, but in most cases their hands, arms, and faces were dyed blue as a sign of mourning.

[207]

764 531 341

[291]

[217]

FIG. 150. WIFE, ACCOMPANIED BY WAILING WOMEN, AT THE GRAVE OF HER DEAD HUSBAND ON THE FESTIVAL OF YŌM EL-GHIṬĀS

The superstructures over the graves show very little variation in form in this cemetery. They are rectangular structures with barrel-vaulted roofs. Many of them were covered with white paint, with simple designs in blue or red; in some cases both colours were used for decoration on a single tomb. Sometimes a text from the Bible was inscribed in Arabic, in red or blue paint, along one side of the monument, a cross being frequently either painted or incised at one end.

796 769 [305] At one grave there was a number of women, their faces and hands streaked with blue dye, each one holding a silk handkerchief, either mauve or green in colour, with which they gently stroked and patted the grave as they wailed in piteous tones, "Still young, O

[1] The same word is used for the covering of the catafalque in a sheikh's tomb. See p. 242.

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my brother!" evidently addressing the dead. By another grave there was a large concourse of people, some seated higher up on an adjacent tomb (Fig. 150). Here a widow was bewailing her dead husband in the following words: "Come and get up! See the weariness [or sorrow] of me and of my children. See how your eldest son[1] has wearied me, and how your brother has oppressed me. You have left me alone with young children. Who will feed them, and who will clothe them?" After this harangue the wailers took up their part, smiting their hands together and striking their cheeks to the rythmic beats of a shallow, single-membrane drum, called *nadam*. When the wailers ceased the widow again started her lament, other women sometimes joining in as a sort of chorus. Passing friends stopped and endeavoured to console her; and one of her young children, who was seated near her, embraced her from time to time. The grave was covered with a *kisweh*, and the *nadam* was bedaubed with blue dye. The widow held two handkerchiefs knotted together, one in each hand, and with these she alternately wiped the tears from her cheeks and patted the grave.

FIG. 151. FEMALE SWEET-SELLER WITH HER TRADE-SIGN

[1] Probably the son by a former wife.

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796 769 [782] [792] Meanwhile, in another part of the cemetery a Coptic priest was going from grave to grave, censing both the mourners and the tombs, in return for which service he was sometimes presented with additional incense or with a certain amount of grain. Grain

[538] [291] [516]

FIG. 152. A POET RECITING ON THE FESTIVAL OF YŌM EL-GHIṬĀS

thus collected is, so I was told, generally distributed afterward to the poor. Water-carriers were busy plying their trade, or occasionally offering a free drink in the name of a dead relative. A sweet-seller was also advertising her wares[1] by means of a tin rattle similar to those bought as children's toys, fixed on to the top of a long stick, which was twisted with a thick sugary substance (Fig. 151). Close to the cemetery a market was in full swing,

[443] [443]

[1] I am told that it is a man who usually sells sweets in this way; it is very rare for a woman to engage in such a trade.

[443]

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where, besides various foods set out for sale, rattles and other toys, 796 as well as small tin cups, could be bought for children. The cups 769 were hung round with small, heart-shaped pieces of tin, which 943 jingled against the sides. Such cups are bought and presented to the children by their parents in memory of this day's ceremony. [431] On another part of the ground a professional poet was entertaining a large crowd. On seeing me, and on my presenting him with a small sum of money, he started reciting a poem in my honour, of [538] which the only words to be distinguished were those with which he wound up the oration: "God will that you return safely." [534] He very cleverly twirled on one of his fingers a drum, resembling in shape the *nadam* used by the wailing women, and in it he collected money from the bystanders (Fig. 152). His attendant was provided with a similar instrument, on which he beat an accompaniment to the poet's recitations.

Gifts of bread, either in the form of flat loaves or sometimes of [431] rings, as well as dates and sweets, are often distributed to the poor [735] at this festival in the name of a dead relative.

The festival lasts till sunset. All who have remained in the cemetery up to this time then return homeward, the women wailing as they go. Often, even after they have reached their homes, [152] they continue their demonstrations of grief, striking their faces and beating their hands together as they have done at the graveside. On such occasions their neighbours will come to condole with them. As night falls the wailing ceases, and the next day work goes on as usual.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

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these tales, which he now relates to the people of his village in the evening. He also tells his tales to his customers, who often wait while he is dying the cloth which they have brought him. Thus some tedious hours of waiting are pleasantly whiled away. 538 115

When he first came to me he was somewhat shy, but after a while, seeing that I was really interested, he would start off without hesitation. Sometimes he would consult the schoolmaster as to what he thought would be most to my taste, giving him a short epitome of two or three stories. Then, when a suitable one was chosen, he would go ahead without further delay. Several stories were recited at a sitting, and occasionally I was writing them down for three or four hours on end. Our servants would often stand near, listening in breathless attention as the plot developed. [291]

FIG. 153. STORY-TELLER, WHO IS ALSO A WATER-CARRIER BY TRADE

The next year I engaged another man, who was a water-carrier by trade (Fig. 153). I was then living in tents near an out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt, and the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) kindly placed his reception-room at my disposal. Wealthier villagers would drop in from time to time and take a seat at a respectful distance from me, while humbler folk stood at the doorway, or squatted on the threshold, all alike listening enthralled, and from time to time uttering ejaculations of appreciation.

I was assured that these tales had never been committed to writing, but had been handed down orally. It may interest my readers to peruse the following, selected from a large number in my possession.

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539 THE WORK OF WOMEN IS BETTER THAN THAT OF MEN; OR, THE IDEAS OF WOMEN ARE SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF MEN

Once upon a time a judge had a wife who was always telling him that he invariably gave judgment in favour of men and never of women. To this accusation the judge replied, "Oh, my dear wife, I think that women are very inferior to men; they are always in need of our help."

As the judge continued to pay no attention to what his wife said, she became angry with him, and said to herself, "I will find a way in which to punish my husband."

[262] So one day the wife told her husband to buy some meat and a melon for dinner. After she had prepared these things a friend came, and she offered *him* the meat for his dinner and cooked some lentils for her husband's meal, to take the place of the meat which she had given to her friend. She then cut out the inside of the melon and poured water inside the rind, which had been left whole. She brought also some fish and put them inside the melon-rind in the water.

When her husband came to take his dinner as usual she brought him the lentils.

He was much surprised when he saw this, and said to her, "What is the matter? I bought meat, not lentils."

So she said to him, "This is all that you bought; you must eat it." So he ate.

After he had eaten the lentils she took a knife and began to cut the melon into pieces, and then started laughing. Her husband said, "What is the matter with you?" She replied, "My dear husband, you must come and see the fish which are in this melon."

The man was very surprised to see such a curious thing, and he went outside his house, where there were some people sitting, and said to them, "I have bought a melon inside which there are fish. I shall invite you to eat some of these fish to-morrow."

The next day he sent out his invitations to the people who had promised to dine with him on the fish. When the guests arrived he said to his wife, "Bring the fish!" So she came forward and said, "O my husband, do fish live in melons? What is the matter with you? O people, you must perceive that the judge has become mad!" So they took him to the asylum and made some one else judge in his place.

When they asked the poor man every day the names of the days of the week he repeated them correctly, but when they asked him, "Where do fish live?" he replied, "Fish live in melons."

One day the woman went to visit her husband and said to him, "When they ask you 'Where do fish live?' you must say, 'They live in water, in ponds and rivers and lakes.'" Then they let him go free, and when he arrived at his house the people came to salute him.

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One night his wife said, "I can make you judge again and make the other judge mad!" She then told him that he must go to the market and buy some milk. So he went and bought it. Then she said, "We are going to invite the new judge to eat with us, and I am going to tell you something that you must say. When I hang a bag of skin filled with milk on your neck, I shall milk you, and you must make a noise such as buffaloes make." So her husband said, "Very well, I will do so."

The woman invited the new judge, and when he came to the house she began to laugh, saying, "I am going to milk my husband, but I am ashamed to do this before you!" The judge replied, "Are husbands milked?" to which she answered, "Yes, they give good milk, and you are going to see it for yourself."

Then the woman called her husband and began to milk him from the skin which was concealed under his clothing. The new judge was very much astonished when he saw this, especially when he ate the food which she had prepared with the milk. After he had eaten he asked the wife, "How can a husband give milk?" to which she answered, "If you wish to be milked you must go to a street which leads to the market, and then you must take off all your clothes and begin to eat grass. When anyone speaks to you do not reply, but make a noise like a buffalo. After that you will give good milk."

So he went and carried out her instructions. While he was thus engaged the inhabitants of the town passed by and saw what he was doing. "What is the matter with you, O our judge?" they asked. He did not answer them, but made a noise like a buffalo. Then they said that the judge had become mad, and they took him to the asylum and brought the old judge and restored him to his position.

The Two Shoes of Henēn

Once upon a time there was a shoemaker whose name was Henēn. An Arab came to him and wished to buy a pair of shoes, but they did not agree about the price, and quarrelled with each other, and Henēn was much annoyed and desired to take his revenge on the Arab.

So when Henēn learnt that the Arab was going to cross the desert he took a pair of shoes and went along the road on which he knew the Arab would go. As he went he put one of the shoes on the ground; the other shoe he placed on the road a mile away from the first. Then he hid himself in a tree near where the second shoe lay.

When the Arab passed by the first shoe he said to himself that it was like Henēn's shoe, and he left it on the ground and did not take it. He then went on his way till he found the second shoe a mile distant from the first. Whereupon he said to himself, "I must leave the camel here and go back to take the first shoe."

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So he went back. And after he had turned back, leaving his camel, Ḥenēn came down the tree and led the camel off to his house. When the Arab returned to the place where he had left his camel he found it had disappeared, so he took the pair of shoes and went to his house. When he arrived there his family said to him, "What have you brought?" He replied, "I have brought back the two shoes of Ḥenēn instead of the camel."

And this proverb, "I have returned with the two shoes of Ḥenēn," is quoted when anyone returns with small things in exchange for large ones.

The Shah of Persia and his Daughter

Once upon a time the Shah of Persia had a wife who gave birth to a very beautiful girl, and then died.

After many years the Shah said to his vizier, "I wish to marry again. I have two pairs of gold bracelets, and whichever woman can fit these bracelets on her wrists shall be my wife."

So the vizier called an old woman and told her to look for a girl on whom the bracelets could be fitted. The old woman sought for such a girl, but the only one she could find was the daughter of the Shah. She informed the Shah of this, so he sent for his daughter and asked her if she wished to marry him. The girl replied, "Very well, my father, I will marry you if you can pay my price." So the Shah asked his daughter what her price would be. The girl replied, "I want you to make for me a large golden cow."

So the goldsmiths came, and the daughter made a drawing of the cow, which she represented as having an empty belly. After the goldsmiths had made the cow she ordered them to make a lock in the belly of the cow. So the goldsmiths did as they were told.

Three days later the girl took water and bread with her and entered the belly of the golden cow and locked herself into it, for she was very much ashamed at the thought of a marriage with her father.

When the Shah sent a message to her to come and be married to him they sought for her everywhere, but could not find her.

The Shah, as he could not find her, waited for three months. Then his viziers aid to him, "What is the use of the golden cow which you caused to be made? We must sell it." So they offered it for sale, and the King of India bought it and took it to his house. At midnight, while he was sleeping, the girl who was in the belly of the golden cow came out to look for food and water, for the bread and water which she had taken with her were finished. While she was looking for food the King saw her and was much astonished, for she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. So he took hold of her and said, "Who are you? Are you a fairy or a human being?" The girl replied, "I am a human being; I am the

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daughter of the King of Persia." And she told him all that had happened.

Then he said to her, " I will marry you instead of one of my cousins. But I am about to travel to another country, for I have work to do there. While I am absent you must stay in the belly of the cow lest perchance one of the daughters of my uncle should hear of you and kill you. I will tell my mother to bring you food for every meal and to place it before the cow. When she departs, you can come out and eat as you wish."

Before he left the King brought his mother to see the cow and said to her, " Act kindly with the cow, as you act with me." So his mother said, " Will the cow eat ? " .He replied, " Oh, it will eat, and you must put food before her for every meal, and leave the room as soon as you can, shutting the door behind you, or the cow will take cold and die." And he went on his way.

At midday the King's mother cooked meat and took it with a jar of water and put it in front of the cow, and left the room quickly and locked the door. After a while the girl came out of the cow and ate a good meal. Half an hour later the mother of the King returned to see what had happened, and found that the food had been eaten and the water drunk, and she said, " I must believe my son, for the cow has eaten the food which I placed in front of her."

Now the three daughters of the King's uncle saw that the King did not wish to take one of them to wife, and they said, " Surely he has found something inside the golden cow, and we must discover what it is." A day later the youngest girl went to the King's mother and asked her to give her the cow, so that her sisters might see it. But the King's mother refused. The next day the eldest girl went to the mother of the King and asked her for the cow. And the mother did not refuse this time, for, she said to herself, " It will be a shame to refuse twice." And she gave the cow to the girl, saying, " You must offer it food at every meal." And the girl said, " Very well," and took it to her home.

At midnight they brought the cow to a special place and made a fire under its belly to melt the gold. When the girl inside the cow felt the heat she came out, whereupon the three girls took hold of her and began to beat her severely, exclaiming, " Ah, you are going to marry, are you ? We will kill you." So they made a box and put her inside it and locked it and threw it into the sea.

At daybreak they returned with the cow to the King's house. Then the King's mother cooked food and put it in front of it. And after a while she went again to see what had happened. But she found that the cow had not eaten its food as usual. So she began to cry, fearing her son the King.

Next day the King returned home, and he asked his mother about the golden cow. His mother said, " I did my best with it." At supper they

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put food in front of the cow, and the King stood by to see the girl. But she did not come.

So he ordered some of his servants to boil a big cauldron full of water and had his mother brought to him, and he said, "I will put you in this boiling water if you do not tell me what has happened to my cow." So she told all that had happened.

Then the King resolved to kill the daughter who had taken the cow from his house. First he married her. The next day he struck her severely and bade her tell him what she had done with his cow. So she told him all that had happened. Then he took a sword and cut off her head, and also cut her body up into pieces. He then put the flesh in a basket and threw it inside the house of her parents and hanged her head on the door of their house.

Now a certain fisherman came at daybreak to the place where the box had been cast into the sea, and threw in his hook to catch fish. Finding that it was very hard to draw in his line, he took his clothes off and dived into the sea and found a big box. So he took it out and went to his house, where he opened it and found in it a very beautiful girl.

The girl asked him about his business, and the fisherman said to her, "I am a poor fisherman, and I have no business at all except fishing." So she told him that she was going to weave him beautiful clothes, and that he could sell these clothes and live on the proceeds.

One day she made a beautiful cloth, weaving into it an account of all her adventures, and then bade him go and sell it to the King of India. When the King saw it and read the writing which was on it he was very glad, and said to the fisherman, "If you will bring me the lady who made this cloth I will give you a great sum of money as a reward." So the fisherman went back and told the girl all that had happened to him. Then the girl was very happy and said, "Very well, you must take me with you." So the fisherman took her to the King of India, who, when he saw her, kissed her many times, and wept. And he gave the man a great sum of money as he had promised.

And he made a feast for forty days, and when this was ended he married the Princess of Persia.

The Story of a Brick-maker

Once upon a time the wife of a brick-maker said, "O God, give me a boy like a camel!" So God heard her prayer and gave her a son like a camel.

The king of the city had seven beautiful daughters, and they went to see this boy who resembled a camel.

When they had departed the boy said to his mother, "I want to take the youngest daughter of the King as my wife." But his mother said,

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"O my son, you are a camel. How can you marry the daughter of a king?" Then he said, "Never mind. I am going to give you a golden tray and also cups of gold, and you must go to the house of the King and enter it and give them to the King's wife. If one of the doorkeepers speaks to you give him some money, but do not speak to anyone at all." 539

So the woman took the tray with the golden cups and entered the palace of the King, and placed them before his wife, and then went away without speaking a word.

The next day the camel gave his mother a beautiful table with golden dishes upon it, and said, "Go to the palace of the King and place these before his wife, but do not speak."

When the King came and saw these beautiful things he said to his wife, "If the woman comes again you must ask her what she wants."

So when the woman arrived on the third day the wife of the King said to her, "What do you want?" And she said, "I want your youngest daughter to be the wife of my son, the camel."

When the King came and heard this he was very much astonished, and he called his vizier and said to him, "How can I give my daughter to a camel? We must consult together on this matter for a while."

Then the vizier said to the King, "I think that the camel must be a rich and noble man, for he sends you such precious things, the like of which your Majesty does not possess. I think he must be very rich and that you may give your consent. But first you must name a high price for your daughter; if he agrees well and good, we will give her to him; but if he refuses it will be better for you to deny him his request."

So, when the mother went again to the palace she was told that the King approved of her request, but as a war had broken out between the King and another country and he needed money and arms he required that the son should bring one hundred camels loaded with guns and rifles as the price of his daughter's hand.

Then the mother went home and said to her son, "O my son, the King has asked me for such and such things, and you cannot possibly obtain them, for we are very poor. Your father is only a brick-maker, and we live in a cottage made of *bûṣ*.[1] Whence can we get these things?" [342]

But the camel said, "Fear not, O my mother. Stay here till I come back." Then he went out and brought a rope and hung it in the doorway of his cottage, and told his mother to take an end of the rope in her hand and to walk to the King's palace. So his mother took hold of the rope and started on her way.

As she went along a number of camels, over two hundred in number, loaded with guns and rifles, followed, and when she reached the King's palace she offered them to the vizier. Then the vizier told the King that the mother of the camel had brought more than two hundred camels,

[1] Dried *dura*-stalks.

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539 "and," he continued, "I think, therefore, that we should give her your daughter to be her son's wife."

The King followed this counsel, and sent a message to the camel that he was ready to give him his young daughter. So the camel caused a notice to appear in the papers that he was about to marry the King's daughter, and he invited some of his friends and gave them a supper. After supper they went to the King's palace and brought the bride to the camel's house.

Then the camel placed a sword between him and his bride, and said to her, "I am going to show you a secret thing." Then he took off his skin, and, behold! he was a very beautiful fairy prince with golden hair.

At daybreak the mother of the bride made some nice biscuits for her daughter and also prepared a dish of macaroni, suspecting that the camel would eat it instead of straw. When she came to her daughter to offer her these things, she asked her about the camel. The daughter said, "It is a camel, my mother, not a human being," and did not tell her mother what she had seen at night.

Before the camel went out he brought his wife a gold tray on which were golden dishes full of delicious food, and he ordered her to offer her mother some breakfast, which she was to take to the King's palace.

When the King saw these precious things he was much astonished, and said to his vizier, "Surely this camel is a very rich man; he always offers us precious things which we do not possess."

On the seventh day after the marriage, as is the custom to the present day, the King and his wife took some beautiful presents to offer to their daughter. When they reached the place they found that the cottage was burned down and that no one was to be seen. But the camel had taken his wife, his mother, and his father and had gone to a distant place, where, after he had prayed to God, a beautiful palace, built of gold and silver bricks and surrounded with flowers, arose upon the spot. The palace, also, was protected by a large number of soldiers. Then the camel took off his skin and became the prince of these parts.

After a while the King and his vizier wandered about, dressed as Arabs, trying to find the King's daughter. One day they were passing near the palace when they were observed by the Prince, who ordered one of his soldiers to bring in these strange men, who, he said, doubtless were thieves. And they were cast into prison.

After three days had passed the men were brought before the Prince, and he asked, "Where were you going?" The King and his vizier replied, "We have a daughter whom we married to a camel, and we are trying to find her." The Prince asked, "How can a camel marry a girl?" And the King answered, "I gave him my daughter."

While they were thus speaking the King's daughter looked out of a

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window, and her father saw her and recognized her, but he could not speak because he was in the presence of a prince. 539

Then the Prince said to the King, "I am the camel who took your daughter, but now I am a prince, and God made me what you see me."

So the King was full of joy, and the Prince became king in his stead. And that's all!

The King and the Story-teller

Once upon a time there was a king who had a story-teller. And this story-teller had a son and two daughters. Three years after the birth of the youngest child the story-teller died, but before his death he said to his son, "My son, if a poor man comes and wishes to marry one of your sisters give one to him if he is a noble and honest man. But if a rich man comes and asks for one of them, and he is not an honourable man, do not grant his request."

Now one day an Arab, who was an honourable man, came to the boy and asked him for one of his sisters. The boy said, "Very well, I will consider the matter, and will give you an answer in two days' time."

During the two days he made inquiries as to the man's character among the members of his tribe. They told him that the Arab was a thoroughly good man, but that he had no house and was living in a tent. So the boy went to the man and said, "I will give you one of my sisters, but first take £1000 and build a good house here." And after the house was built the boy gave the Arab more money to buy the furniture, and also some camels.

Three days later the marriage was celebrated, and the bridegroom made a great feast for the Arabs with the camels, which he had killed.

Next a rich man came and asked the boy if he might marry the other sister. The boy replied once again, "I will send you an answer in two days' time." As a result of his inquiries he learned that the man was very rich, but not honourable.

However, he said to himself, "Nevertheless, I will give my sister to him; I will then see what will happen." So he gave the girl to the rich man, thus disobeying his father's wishes.

A week later the boy wrote a letter to the King to whom his father had been story-teller and asked that he might be taken into the royal service. When he read it the King said, "Let the boy come here, for he is the son of my story-teller."

After a while the boy returned to his own home and said to his mother, "O my mother, my father, before he died, told me never to do good things to human beings, but to be kind and do good things to dogs. He also said that I must make friends of dogs, not of human beings."

Now the King had a fierce dog, and the boy was in the habit of giving this dog a fine pie every morning. The King had also a small gazelle,

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539 of which he was very fond. One day the boy asked the keeper of the gazelle to accept some money from him and to give him the gazelle in exchange. So the boy took the gazelle and put it in a special place and brought a keeper to look after it. The next morning the King made inquiries for his gazelle, which had disappeared. A poor man, who was living near the house in which the gazelle was kept by the boy, went to the King and told him that his gazelle was in the house of a person whom the son of the story-teller had engaged to look after it.

So the King called the keeper to him and said, "I will cut off your head if you do not tell me about the man who stole my gazelle." On hearing this the man was very frightened, and said, "This boy [pointing to the son of the King's story-teller] who is sitting beside you brought it to me one day and ordered me to look after it." So the King said to the boy, "Why have you treated me in this way? Your father was a faithful man: I will tell my fierce dog to eat you."

Then they brought the dog to eat the boy. And when the dog came it began to jump and spring up at the boy, and licked his hands and played with him, and was overjoyed to be with him. When the King saw this he was very much astonished, and said, "What have you done to my dog?" The boy said, "I have done nothing at all, but my father told me to be always kind to dogs." Then the King forgave him.

But a week later the boy wished to test the words which his father had spoken to him. So he stole the gazelle a second time, and put it in a house in the city, and brought a man whom he ordered to look after it. The King was very angry when he heard that his gazelle was again lost. Three days later a man came and said to him, "O King, live for ever! I know the man who took the gazelle. He is the boy who is sitting beside you."

Then the King said to the boy, "Surely I will cut off your head in a week's time." But the boy begged the King to allow him to return to his own house in order that he might see his mother and his two sisters. And the King allowed him to go.

When the boy went back to his home he took some presents and went to the house of his sister who had married the Arab, and he told her and her husband about all that had happened to him. Then the Arab wept bitterly and said, "Surely I will ask the King to cut off my head instead of yours." But the boy said, "Never. I will not consent to such a thing," and left him.

A day later the boy went to the house of his other sister, who had married the rich man, and told her and her husband all that had happened. Then the husband said to the boy, "You are very bad, and your father and mother are also very bad. Why did you steal the King's gazelle? You deserve the punishment."

So the boy left him and went back to his mother's house. Three days

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later he returned to the King's palace as he had promised, and his rich brother-in-law and his Arab brother-in-law followed him. When they reached the palace the Arab came forward and said to the King, "O King, live for ever! you must cut off my head instead of this boy's." But the rich man said nothing. 539

Then the boy said to the King, "O King, live for ever! I will repeat three sayings to you before you cut off my head." And the King gave him leave.

So the boy began to speak, and he said, "My father gave me three pieces of advice, and I wished to test them. And the first is, 'You must do good to dogs, not to human beings'; the second is, 'Give your sisters to poor but honourable men'; and the third is, 'Do not give your sisters to rich and dishonourable men.' So I made a practice of giving a pie every morning to your fierce dog, and I stole your gazelle. Then you threw me to the dog to be eaten by him, but your dog remembered the kindness I had shown him, and he would not harm me, but licked my hands and played with me. The second saying I tested by giving one of my sisters to this poor, honourable man, and he came forward just now and wished to give his life for mine. The third I tested by giving my other sister to this rich and dishonourable man, and he blamed me much and never did me one good turn. Therefore I am between your hands, and it is for you to do with me as you wish."

Then the King said to the boy, "You are very clever." And he pardoned him and gave him a post of honour in his palace.

The Cat and the Rat

Once upon a time there was a rat that was very hungry. And while he was searching for food a cat met him. So he hid himself behind a pillar. And the cat said to him, "O rat, let us go and look after the hens." To which the rat replied, "My father told me never to trust or associate with one's enemy." Then the cat said to the rat, "My dear, I am a pilgrim, and I am wearing a large rosary, and I have made a vow to God that I will never injure any rat, and I pray all day long."

So the rat went to tell his mother what the cat had said. But his mother said, "O my son, do not go with your enemy, for your father told you never to do so." But the rat said, "O my mother, he is a pilgrim, and he has a large rosary hung over his neck, by which he counts his prayers." So his mother said, "Very well, you can go."

He then set off, and said to the cat, "It is all right, I will accompany you." Three days later the cat became very hungry, so he killed the rat and ate it.

The moral of this story is, Do not trust or associate with your enemy. [597]

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CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 121 175 119

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

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The poorer classes lived in tumbledown dwellings similar to those in which they live at the present time, as can be seen from the clay models of such houses dating from the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.).[1] Houses exactly like those of the respectable but not well-to-do *felláḥīn* have recently been found at el-'Amarneh.[2]

The portico, so marked a feature of the better type of modern

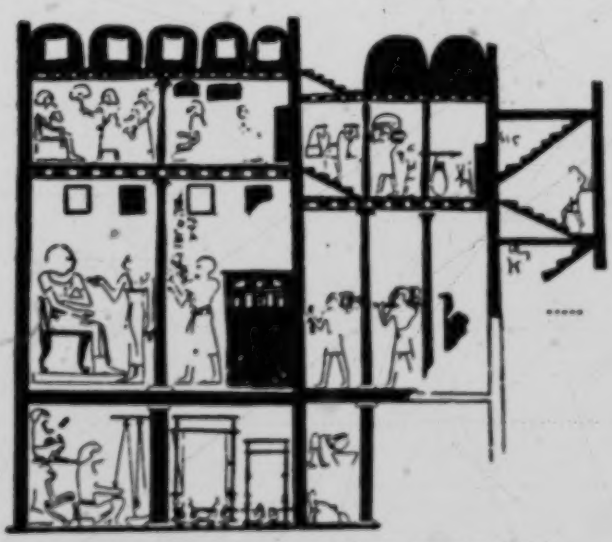

FIG. 154. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TWO-STORIED HOUSE
After A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 3.

house (*cf.* p. 228, Fig. 134), especially the country house or house enclosed in a garden, was no less a feature of the ancient mansions also, as can be seen from numerous representations of such belonging to different periods.[3]

FA 352

The *maṣṭabeh* outside the house-door (p. 32) was probably no less frequent in an ancient than it is in a modern Egyptian town

A [113]

[1] H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients* (Berlin, 1925), p. 267 W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 2.

[2] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff.; see also W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 4.

[3] See, for example, J. Capart, *L'art égyptien*, vol. i, "L'architecture" (Brussels, 1922), Pl. 110; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 207; H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1918–1920," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1920, pp. 24 f.

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or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks[2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

A [326] [302] [415]

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

A [538] A [764] A [761]

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport, pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

A 113

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 500, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 11 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

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I have pointed out on pp. 88f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 160 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

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in vogue in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (2160–1788 B.C.) is definitely proved by a blue faience figure of a girl dating from the Eleventh to Thirteenth Dynasty and by the mummies of two girls dating from the Eleventh Dynasty. Both the mummies and the faience figure have tattoo marks on the body and the limbs.[1]

F
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302

Either locks of false hair fastened on, or whole wigs, were commonly used by the ancient Egyptian women.[2] The long plaits of hair worn by the modern peasant women (p. 56) can certainly be matched in ancient times;[3] Professor Petrie found a long plait of hair and a false fringe even in a First-Dynasty royal tomb at Abydos.[4] We have no indication, however, that the plaits served the same utilitarian purposes that they often serve nowadays (see p. 56)! It is to be observed that the wooden combs used to-day in dressing the hair (p. 56, Fig. 26) are very like the ancient ones (Fig. 156).

FIG. 156. ANCIENT COMB
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Pl. 19, 1.

The painting of the eyes with *kohl* was practised as much in ancient times as it is at the present day (p. 59), and by both men and women. In a satirical papyrus dating from the later New Kingdom, and now preserved in the Turin Museum, there is a caricature of a woman looking into a hand-mirror and 'making up.'[5] The constant references to perfumes in the ancient religious and literary texts[6] make it evident that the modern love of scent (p. 59) is not a recently acquired taste.

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[538]

A
113

[1] H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1922–1923," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1923, pp. 22, 26, 28.

[2] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 248; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies* (London, 1924), p. 117, Fig. 33.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

[4] W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, Part I (London, 1902), Pl. IV, Fig. 7.

[5] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

[6] *E.g.* A. Erman, *op cit.*, pp. 28, 33, 61, 133, 209, 244, 247, 249, 252.

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The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle [1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving "late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave." [3]

A [463]

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus [6] tells us that "the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

FA [765]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabîyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

FA 291

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] ii, 37.
[5] See A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 200.
[6] ii, 36.

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in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabiyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

F A 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

F A 515 264 782

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

F A 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

F A 844

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

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give birth, with either foot planted on a brick.[1] From these two bricks was developed a structure resembling in outline the modern confinement chair (p. 63), but, so Professor Spiegelberg supposes, made of brick. A confinement chair of this kind was already in use in the Old Kingdom (2900–2475 B.C.).[2] It would be interesting to know at what date the wooden confinement chair replaced the brick structure. It may have done so at quite an early period, and "the brick," which is the designation of the bearing-stool even in a Nineteenth-Dynasty text, may be simply an archaism.

The midwife or female attendant in ancient times cut the umbilical cord[3] as she does to-day (p. 63). But unfortunately it is no longer the custom to wash the child immediately after birth.[4] This performance is now put off till the seventh day after that, and even then the child is only partly washed (p. 76).

A [993]

Importance was evidently attached to the placenta (see pp. 63 ff.) in ancient times; there seems to have been a priest of the royal placenta.[4] The umbilical cord seems also to have been preserved as it is to-day (pp. 64, 79), for in the Myth of Horus we are told how that god set out to obtain the umbilical cord of his father Osiris, which had fallen into the hands of Sēth, Osiris' murderer, and how, having won it from Sēth, Horus buried it in the place sacred to Osiris in Herakleopolis Magna.[5]

A [993]

F A 844 553 846

It is to be observed that the sieve played a part in ancient as in modern birth ceremonies (pp. 63, 79), for Anubis is shown trundling one in the scene in the temple of Ḥatshepsut at Deir el-Baḥri which represents the gods determining the duration of the new-born royal infant's life.[6] This determining of the duration of the royal child's life may be compared, perhaps, with the modern naming ceremony on the seventh day after birth (pp. 78 ff.). In ancient Egypt, however, a child's name seems to have been given it at birth,[7] and, anyhow in the case of a princely family, to have been also registered.[8] On the other hand, it is to be noted that

A [113]

[1] W. Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologisches Randglossar zum Alten Testament* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 19 ff.
[2] As can be seen from the determinative of the word in K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, § 1180.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[4] A. Erman, *ibid.*
[5] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, pp. 243 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[7] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 168 ff.
[8] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[9] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), p. 19.

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festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

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In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p.81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

A [532] [534]

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, A 533 534 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

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"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

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852
302

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

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A
304

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

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[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

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priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Sakkāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kꜣ*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḫ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmehet, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{16}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{16}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

A [113]

[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Eheverträge aus vorsaïtische Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

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584 585 divorce thee] and hate thee and take me another wife beside thee, then will I give thee $\frac{1}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, apart from that $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver entered above, which I have given thee as thy woman's gift, so amounting in all to 1 *deben* of silver, making 5 staters, making again 1 *deben* of silver.

And I give thee $\frac{1}{2}$ of all the goods and all the possessions that I shall acquire, I together with thee.

The children whom thou shalt bear me are the owners of all the goods and all the possessions that I possess and that I shall acquire.

Herewith the list of the possessions which thou hast brought with thee into the house:

1 *ḥrḥ*, woven, which is 2 cubits long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ cubits wide, worth $\frac{5}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

1 *ḥmdt*, woven, which is 2 cubits long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ cubits wide, worth $2\frac{1}{2}/10$ *deben* of silver.

1 *inḥn* of byssus, which is $5\frac{1}{2}$ cubits long, worth $1\frac{1}{2}/10$ *deben* of silver.

A woman's robe, worth $\frac{1}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

A chased [?] bronze mirror, worth $\frac{1}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

A woman's *mšḥ*-garment, worth $\frac{1}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

A *ḥrḥ*-case, which is a bronze receptacle, worth $\frac{1}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

A silver ring, worth $\frac{1}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

The value of thy metal goods and thy woven goods which thou hast brought with thee into mine house amounteth in money value to $1\frac{6}{10}$ *deben* of silver, making 7 staters, making again $1\frac{6}{10}$ *deben* of silver.

While thou art within, they are within with thee. While thou art without, they are without with thee.[1] But if thou departest and desertest me thine husband, I will give thee $2\frac{1}{2}/10$ *deben* of silver, making $1\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $2\frac{1}{2}/10$ *deben* of silver, of those $\frac{5}{10}$ *deben* of silver entered above, which I have given thee as thy woman's gift.

Written by Harmakhoros son of Eskhons.

F A 585 There then follows a list of witnesses.

As stated on p. 92, the bride is usually taken to her husband's house in the evening. Such, too, was the custom in ancient Egypt, certainly at the time when the *First Tale of Khamuas* was written, for in the account of the marriage of Ahure[2] we read how Pharaoh said to his steward: "Let Ahure be taken to the house of Neneferkaptaḥ to-night, and let all beautiful things be taken with her." We are also told that Pharaoh likewise had a present of silver and gold taken to Ahure, and that "all the household of Pharaoh caused themselves to be brought unto me [Ahure is speaking]; and Neneferkaptaḥ made merry with me, and he

[1] Meaning that the wife has absolute right of possession over the property which she has brought with her.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests* (Oxford, 1900), p. 18.

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entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

F A 586

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

F A 847 789

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓄿 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

F A

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

NKA 778 823

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fikih* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

F [799]

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

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[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.
[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.
[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

A [113]

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 137 ff.

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The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when a death occurs (pp. 111 f., 122 ff.) is still admirably illustrated by a relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh.[1] The widow is depicted as having collapsed in a faint on hearing of her husband's sudden death, and then, after having been restored to consciousness and dragged to her feet, as tottering along supported by two friends. The various attitudes of grief of the women surrounding the widow are characteristic of modern female mourners. It is interesting to observe, too, that one of the attendants holds the widow's necklace, which has been taken off on receipt of the news of her husband's death (*cf.* p. 50). Further proof that the modern Egpytian peasant women display their grief before and at a funeral by exactly the same gestures and conduct as did their ancestors—by dishevelling the hair, tearing the clothes, exposing the breasts, gathering up mud and with it plastering the head, breasts, and arms, and by wildly waving the arms and beating the head and breasts—is to be found in numbers of ancient paintings and reliefs.[2] An admirable example is the photograph

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[532]

FIG. 162. WAILING WOMEN
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 8.

[1] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pls. LXXXI f.

[2] See W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, Fig. 5 on p. 33; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 120, 166, 167, 209, 210; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York, 1925), Pls. XIX ff. (Pl. XXI shows a woman placing mud or dust on her head); Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt* (London, 1915), Pl. XXIV; G. Roeder, *Die Denkmäler des Pelizaeus Museums zu Hildesheim* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 111 f.

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(Fig. 162) of a painting in the tomb-chapel of Re'mōse at Thebes.

The attitude of the wailing mother in Fig. 50, p. 110, and Fig. 137, p. 236, finds an exact parallel in the wailing women depicted in a painting in the tomb-chapel of Amenemḥēṭ at Thebes.[1]

A [535] [532]

F A [822]

FIG. 163. FUNERARY DANCE PERFORMED BY FEMALE MOURNERS
After W. Wresiński, op. cit., Pl. 419.

The modern custom of smearing the hands, arms, and face with blue dye (pp. 111, 122, 264) may also be ancient, in view of blue having been the ancient mourning colour (p. 286); but, so far as my brother is aware, the ancient artists have not shown this in the pictures of wailing women.

The perambulation of the town or village by the female relatives and friends immediately after a death has taken place (p. 109) is described by Herodotus[2] in the following words:

> When a member of any distinction dies in an household, all the female members of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then, leaving the corpse in the house, they parade the town, and smite themselves, having their garments girt up and their breasts exposed; and all their female kin accompany them.

A 764 765 535

The pre- and post-burial dance performed by the mourning women, described on pp. 114, 123, 263, finds close parallel in a relief from a New Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh, now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 163). As in the funerary dance described on p. 114, the women are dancing to the beating of single-membrane

[1] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *ibid.*, bottom register, left.
[2] ii, 85.

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drums. The attitude and motions of the wailing sister who advanced toward me with arms extended and swaying from side to side (p. 122) may perhaps be compared with those of the female dancers (musician-priestesses of Ḥathor) who are depicted performing at the funeral of Senet in that lady's tomb-chapel at Thebes.[1]

A 764

The viewing of the corpse by visitors and relatives, as it lies

FIG. 164. BRICK SUPERSTRUCTURE ABOVE A MIDDLE-KINGDOM GRAVE
After D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen*, Pl. 81.

extended on a bed, was evidently an ancient practice, for in a relief at el-ʿAmarneh [2] King Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti are depicted taking a farewell look at the corpse of one of their daughters, which lies on a bed. Near at hand the women are wailing, as I have described them as doing in similar circumstances on p. 122.

F A 764

Palm-branches were carried in ancient, as they are in modern, funeral processions (p. 116), as can be seen from the picture of

A [113]

[1] Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker* (London, 1920), Pl. XXIII.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 365, Fig. 164.

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the funeral procession of a Nineteenth-Dynasty priest named Kynebu in his tomb-chapel at Sheikh 'Abd-el-Kurneh.[1] The custom of slaughtering an animal at the graveside on the occasion of a funeral (p. 110) is, of course, exceedingly ancient, and is referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*: "slaughtering is made at the door of thy façade-stela."[2] Was the false door, one wonders, sprinkled with the victim's blood?

With the statement on pp. 113 f.,[3] that on returning from the funeral "the men seat themselves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends," is to be compared a passage in a letter written to his dead wife by an official of the late New Kingdom: "I bewailed thee exceedingly along with my household in front of my dwelling."[4]

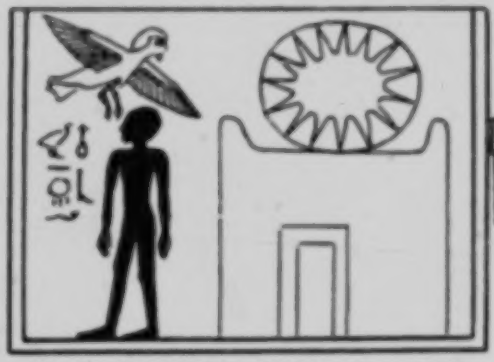

FIG. 165. SHADOW AND BAI OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A TOMB

After E. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i, Pl. CIV.

A [114] [115] [164]

The rectangular brick superstructure of a modern grave, with its vaulted roof and door-like recess at one end (p. 116), closely resembles the superstructure of the ordinary middle-class grave of all periods (see, for example, Fig. 164).[5] Ancient examples of the large burial chamber with vaulted roof described on p. 116 are also to be found.[6]

F A 774 775

The idea that a man's shadow is a separate entity (p. 113) also prevailed in ancient Egypt. A vignette in an Eighteenth-Dynasty copy of *The Book of the Dead* depicts a man's shadow

A [113]

[1] J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), vol. iii, Pl. LXIX.

[2] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. x, p. 199.

[3] *Cf.* also pp. 121 f.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 25.

[5] *E.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* (London, 1914) Part II, Pl. XV; D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen* (Philadelphia, 1911), Pls 77–82.

[6] D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. 84; H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, p. 266, Fig. 2.

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and his *ḥai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

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769

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *pert*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulū'*, used in the combination *ṭulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Pert* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

A
765
769

In ancient Egyptian *pert* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *pert-r-ḥrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

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[769]
[773]

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the wag-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

A
[113]

[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.
[2] E. Naville, *Das ægyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.
[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.
[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

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Immediately below this text, and intimately connected with it, four women are to be seen, each carrying a basket of bread on her head and holding a vessel containing water in her right hand.[1] Such representations of men and women going in procession to the cemetery loaded with provisions are very common in tomb-chapels, especially in those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Very conspicuous in these scenes are the baskets containing articles of food, generally borne on the heads of women as they are at a modern *Ṭala'*, and of exactly the same shape as those used for that purpose to-day. A similar text to that just quoted, and dating probably from the Sixth Dynasty, reads as follows: "A coming-forth-unto-the-voice for him in his tomb-chapel at the monthly and half-monthly festival, on the firsts of the seasons, the firsts of the months, and the firsts of the weeks."[2] In later times this weekly offering seems often to have degenerated into a mere pouring out of water, accompanied by the recitation of formulæ, a custom still surviving in Lower Nubia and parts of Upper Egypt.[3] With regard to this weekly graveside ceremony, it might be pointed out that Isis of Philæ was supposed to perform it at the 'Holy Place' on the island of Bīgeh, the burial-place of Osiris, doubtless in the capacity of a wife visiting the grave of her dead husband.[4]

Prt occasionally occurs in its funerary significance without the following *r-ḫrw*, and then it seems generally to be accompanied by the attribute *'ꜣt*, 'great'—*i.e.*, 'the great going forth,' or, to use the modern equivalent, 'Great *Ṭala'*.'[5] For example, a man prays that on the day in which he departs this life there may be "a great going forth of my fellow-townsfolk."[6] The same expression is used in *The Decree of Canopus*, where it is employed to denote the annual commemoration of the death of the deified Berenile.[7] In the Greek version of this last-mentioned inscription *prt 'ꜣt* is rendered *μέγα πένθος*, 'great lamentation,' an indication that those taking part in this 'going forth' wailed at the graveside, and probably also on their way there and back, as is the custom in modern times.

[1] C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–58), vol. ii, P. 5.
[2] A. M. Blackman, *loc. cit.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, with note 4 and the following pages.
[5] Used without the attribute *'ꜣt* when denoting the 'procession' of Upwawet in the Osirian mysteries; see H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 21.
[6] H. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[7] *Ibid.*

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In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

A [532]

FA 775

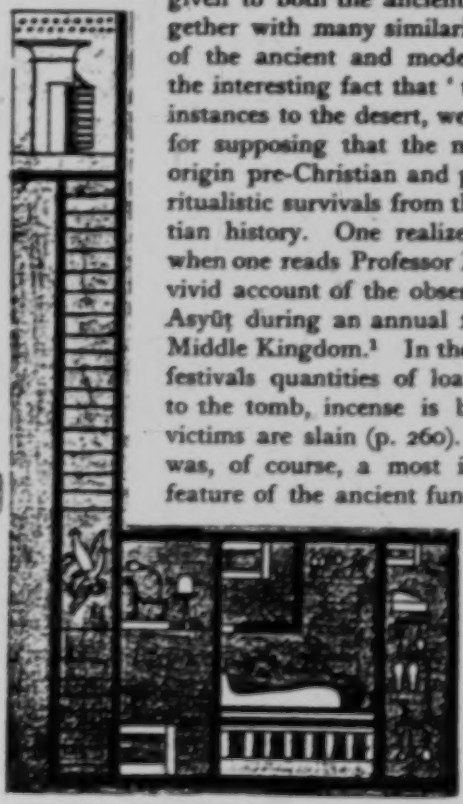

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, The Dawn of Civilization (London, 1894), p. 198.

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *Ṭalā'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaiḥap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korān, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

A [113]

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.

[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F A 7 M 5

ting to the burial-chamber in order to unite with the mummy which rests there (Fig. 166). The idea that the dead resided

A [532]

FIG. 167. WIDOW BEWAILING HER DEAD HUSBAND
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 417.

in their tombs as well as in the realm of Osiris or in heaven with the sun-god is to be found in Egyptian religious texts of all periods.[1]

F A 7 M 5

An ancient painting (Fig. 167) depicting a widow bewailing her husband at one of her weekly or less frequent periodical visits

A [323] [212] [291] [532]

FIG. 168. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Caillaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers* (Paris, 1831), Pl. 16.[2]

FIG. 169. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Caillaud, *ibid.*[2]

to his tomb may be compared with one of my photographs (Fig. 150) of a modern widow similarly engaged.

A [113]

[1] *E.g.*, A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (London, 1907), pp. 106 ff.; see, too, F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 15, 38.
[2] See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, Part II, Pl. 7.

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EG 579

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

The accounts of the two inter-village fights given on pp. 129 ff. bear striking resemblances to the account given by Juvenal, in his famous Fifteenth Satire, of the fight between the inhabitants of Ombos and Dendereh. That fight and one of those that I witnessed occurred at the celebration of a local religious festival, and, moreover, it and the fight described by me on p. 130 began with stone-throwing.

A [192]

FIG. 170. ANCIENT AND MODERN POTSHERDS, SHOWING CORD-MARKINGS, THE LOWER ANCIENT, THE TWO ABOVE MODERN

EA 323

Though the pots used in a modern Egyptian village differ greatly in shape from those used in ancient times, the modern potter seems to employ much the same methods as did his ancestors in the manufacture of his vessels (Figs. 168, 169).

A [532]

As can be seen from the photograph of the Eighteenth-Dynasty sherd (Fig. 170) picked up by me at el-ʿAmarneh, the ancient like the modern potter used cord to strengthen the large pots before they were baked (see pp. 138, 150 f.); he likewise separated the newly turned vessel from the mass of clay beneath it by cutting it off with a string (Fig. 171, and see p. 152).

FIG. 171. CUTTING THE NEWLY MADE VESSEL FROM THE CLAY BENEATH IT
After F. Ll. Griffith, Beni Hasan, Part IV, Pl. XX.

The ancient kilns closely resembled the modern ones in shape, and like them were evidently roofless, for a painting in a tomb-chapel at Beni Ḥasan (Fig. 168) shows the flames issuing from the top (*cf.* p. 148 and p. 141, Fig. 65). This painting also

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shows (Fig. 169) two men preparing the clay by kneading it with their feet (*cf.* pp. 135, 151).

The resemblance of the ancient to the modern clay granaries

FIG. 172. ANCIENT BRICK-MAKERS
After P. E. Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara* (London, 1900), Pl. XXI.

has already been pointed out (p. 280). Tall granaries standing on the ground, such as I saw at el-Kāb (p. 153), were of course exceedingly common in ancient Egypt.[1]

The ancient and modern methods of brick-making (p. 154) are identical, as can be seen from Fig. 172. The Twelfth-Dynasty brick-mould found by Professor Petrie at el-Lāhūn (Fig. 173) is exactly like that used at the present day (see p. 154, Fig. 81).[2]

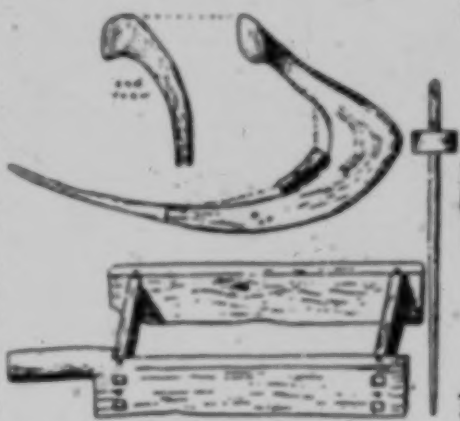

FIG. 173. TWELFTH-DYNASTY SICKLE, SPINDLE, AND BRICK-MOULD
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, Pl. IX.

Sheep-dung, which is still commonly used as fuel in Egypt, was similarly employed anciently, certainly during the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and so, too, probably was cow-dung. Herodotus

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 60a, 63; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 173, Fig. 31; Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] See also W. Wreszinski, *Bericht über die photograph. Expedition* (Halle a. S., 1927), Pl. 13, B.
[3] See T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.

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may have been referring to the way in which cow-dung is made into cakes for fuel (p. 154) when he says:[1] "They take up dung with their hands."

Baskets of the same shape and same technique as the *maḳṭaf* (p. 156, Fig. 83) were made anciently, as can be seen from the photograph of such a basket found at el-ʿAmarneh (Fig. 174), and dating therefore from the Eighteenth Dynasty. Such baskets are constantly depicted in reliefs and paintings from the Third Dynasty onward, often as being carried, as at the present day, on the heads of the women.[2] Baskets of much the same shape and of the same technique as the Eighteenth-Dynasty baskets shown in Fig. 175 are woven at the present day (p. 159)—*i.e.*, they are made of palm-leaf with a foundation of split midribs and built up spirally with over-sewing.[3] In el-ʿAmarneh was found a basket tray[4] that is almost an exact replica of that depicted in Fig. 89, p. 161, while the two baskets, the one ancient and the other modern, shown together (Fig. 176) are also practically identical.

FIG. 174. ANCIENT MAKTAF
After T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, Pl. XXI, 4.

The *ḫaṣaṣ* (p. 160) was as much employed anciently as it is now, and is frequently shown in the ancient reliefs and paintings.[5] A bed made like a *ḫaṣaṣ*, and somewhat similar to that mentioned on p. 161, may be depicted in the Third-Dynasty tomb-chapel of Ḥesy.[6]

Palm-fibre rope like that in use at the present day (see p. 161 and Frontispiece) has been found in tombs of all periods.[7]

[1] ii, 36.
[2] See above, p. 299, and *cf.* p. 37, Fig. 14, p. 80, Fig. 38.
[3] See also W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 1.
[4] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXI, 3.
[5] *E.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh* (London, 1893), Part I, Pl. XXII.
[6] W. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1911–12: The Tomb of Hesy* (Cairo, 1913), p. 29 and Pl. XIX.
[7] See, *e.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), p. 33 and Pl. XXXIV.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F A 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Ḥasan and elsewhere[1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

F A 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [174]

FIG. 175. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt.[3]

F A 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

F A 241 423

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings.[6]

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.
[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bershek*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

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and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-ʿAmarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht.*[2]

FA 285 [192]

FA 407

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *fūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A 286 [532]

G [407]

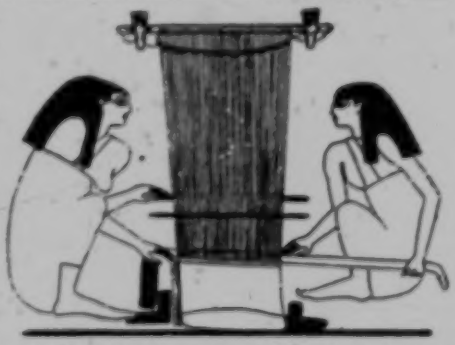

FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Caillaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 27a.

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

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The modern Shadūf (pp. 190 f.) finds its exact counterpart in paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as '*arūset el-ḳamḥ*,' 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

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A
789
718
241
A
[312]
[532]

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

A
[532]

F
A
431
465
241

FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

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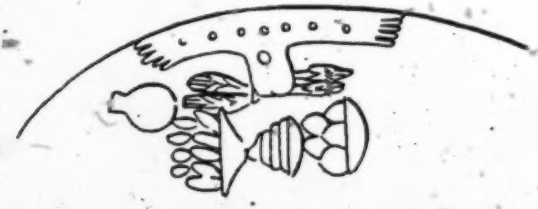
second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs :

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]



A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥekat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏt*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

A F 789 782

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

A [113]

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83 ; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

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corn *ʿarūseh*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *ʿafārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkereʿsenb is shown making food-offerings

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Khaʿemḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

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be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 241 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

A [113]

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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

F A [775] [776] [779]

G [412] [243]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD
After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ſſy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *'ibdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

F A 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

F A [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.
[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.
[3] ii, 84.

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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

F A 787 753 755 776

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrit* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told[5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

F A 789 793

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr[8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

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F A 789 782

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

000

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

A [113]

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 336 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1] FA 782 342 [346]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning. FA 165 152 776 [119]

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8] FA 577 824

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9] FA 538

A 113

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 19[illegible], pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

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It should be observed that the story of *The Shah of Persia and his Daughter* (pp. 272 ff.) bears a certain resemblance to the tale told to Herodotus [1] about Mykerinos, his daughter, and the golden image of a cow. If there is any connexion between the two stories, that told to Herodotus may after all be a genuine native folk-tale and not, as Professor Spiegelberg has suggested,[2] a mere dragoman's explanation of a monument—unless, of course, the modern tale is simply a modification of the Herodotean, and reached the masses by way of the Hellenized Egyptians of Græco-Roman times.

[1] ii, 130 f.
[2] *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 15.

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LIST OF ARABIC WORDS
EMPLOYED IN THE TEXT

104

A[1]

abb (pl. *abahāt*), father; *Yā abūi!* O my father! an exclamation of distress or pain, 119, 226
aḥsan, better; *aḥsan khāliṣ*, much better, 123
aiwa, yes, 83
akh, alas! fie!, 225 f.
akhkh (pl. *ikhwāt*, *ikhwān*[2]), brother; *Yā akhūi!* O my brother!, 123
atl, tamarisk, 205

B

baḳīyeh, el-, what remains over, 114
ballāṣ (pl. *balālīṣ*), water-pot, 142, 153
barakeh, blessing, healing virtue, good luck, 33, 65, 99 f., and *passim*
barūkeh, lucky coin, 99
bashkūr, iron rod for moving bread in the oven, 164
battaw, bread made from *dura*-flour and resembling oatcake, 65, 163
buḥāḳ, fumes, 53
būṣ, dry maize-stalks, 27 f., 148, 150, 192

D

darābukkeh, pottery drum, 85, 168
dastūr, permission, 229
dikkeh (pl. *dikak*), wooden bench with back and arms, 27
duḳḳ, tattoo! (imperat. masc. sing. of *daḳḳ*, he has tattooed), 51
dura, maize, 39, 163 f., 175, 182, 192, 310

Ḍ

A strong palatal.

ḍufr, nail, claw; possibly 'horn' of a cerastes (horned viper), 66

E

ēy, what, 120

F

fakrūn, tortoise, 194, *n.* 2
farrāsh, sweeper, 248, *n.* 1, 249
Fātiheh, el-, the first chapter of the Ḳorān, 212, 252
faṭīr, sweet pastry, 175 f.
feddān, acre, 38 f.
fellāḥ (fem. *fellāḥeh*, pl. *fellāḥīn*), cultivator, peasant, *passim*
fi, in, 114
fiḳīh (pl. *fuḳahā*), person who recites the Ḳorān and who is more or less versed in the religion and law of Islām, 109, 111 f., 114 f., 117 ff., 172, 256, 259, 293, 308 f.
fiṭāmeh, act of weaning; used metaphorically of the last time of irrigating a field of *dura*, 175, 177
fulān, so and so, 118
fūweh, madder, 194

G

gallabīyeh (pl. *galālīb*), a long blouse, often made of white or blue cotton cloth, 32, 73, 88, 187, 285 f.
garūt, an implement used in pottery-making, 149 f.
gebel, mountain, 246
gināb, excellency; *gināb es-sitt*, honoured lady, 69
ginn, class of supernatural beings, 68 f., 227

GH

A very guttural r.

ghiṭās, baptism by immersion; *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, 263, 298

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[1] For the pronunciation of modern Egyptian Arabic vowels and consonants see J. S. Willmore, *The Spoken Arabic of Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 1 ff.
[2] *Ikhwān* means 'brethren,' 'associates.'

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Ḥ

A smooth but very strong guttural aspirate.

ḥagar, stone, 203
ḥalfa, coarse kind of grass, 248
ḥamr, reddish clay used in pottery-making, 145
ḥaseneh, charity, 65, 118
ḥayāt, life ; *El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*, May what remains over be in your life, 114
ḥelbeh, fenugreek, 78
ḥenna, red dye made from the leaves of the shrub *Lawsonia inermis*, 57, 87 f.
ḥigāb, charm, amulet, 71
ḥirbāyeh, chameleon, 66

I

iblīz,[1] mud of the Nile left behind after the inundation, 62
ibrīḳ (pl. *ibārīḳ*), ewer with long, curved spout, 78
iddī, give ! ; *iddīnī*, give me, 118
ism, name ; *Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*, In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, 82
iswid, black, 206

K

kaḥk, cakes, 115, 118
kammūn, cumin, 206
keda, thus, 83
kenīseh, church, 106
kishk, wheat mixed with milk, made into small balls, and dried in the sun,[2] 89, 222 f.
kisweh, rug, carpet, 264, *n.* 1, 265
Kiyakh, fourth month in the Coptic year, 234
koḥl, antimony, 59, 79 f., 284
kunāfeh, fine macaroni, vermicelli, 175 f.
kurbāg, whip made of hide, 131
kūz (pl. *kīzān*), mug, 75, 167

Ḳ

Deep guttural k.

ḳāḍi, judge ; one who draws up marriage contracts and who arranges divorces, 43, 92, 191 f.
ḳādūs (pl. *ḳawādīs*), special kind of pottery jar, several of which are attached by cords to the water-wheel,[3] 101
ḳafaṣ (pl. *aḳfāṣ*), basket or cage made of palm-ribs, 160 f., 165, 304
ḳamḥ, wheat, corn, 172 f.
ḳandīl (pl. *ḳanādīl*), old-fashioned saucer-lamp, 237
ḳarīn (fem. *ḳarīneh*, pl. *aḳrān*), personality born with each human being and of the same sex, pp. 54, 64 ff., 69 ff. and *passim*
ḳibleh, prayer-niche in a mosque, 250
ḳulleh (pl. *ḳulal*), earthen water-bottle, 140, 149, 151 f., 167, 231 f., 237

KH

Pronounced like ch *in Scottish* loch.

khāliṣ, much, very, exceedingly, 123
Khamasīn, the period immediately following the Coptic festival of Easter Sunday and terminating on Whit Sunday—an interval of forty-nine days,[4] 261
khubz, wheaten bread, 64 f., 163
khud, take !, 118

L

lāzimeh, obligatory gift, a special kind of charm, 199
līf, fibre from the trunk of the palm-tree, 161

M

mā, what, that which, 220 f.
mabsūṭ, pleased, 58
maḥalleh, implement on which wool is wound after it is spun, 73
maḥāreh, kind of shell, 203

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[1] Derived from πηλός, according to E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–), vol. i, p. 248.
[2] See also E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. ii, p. 223, n. 1.
[3] See p. 171, and E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 26.
[4] See E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 222 f.

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LIST OF ARABIC WORDS

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maḳṭaf (pl. *maḳāṭif*), large basket woven from palm-leaves, 65, 155 f., 304
malāk (pl. *malāyikeh*), angel, 78
malḳaf (pl. *malāḳif*), ventilator on roof of house, 280
mandareh, reception room, 27
maṣṭabeh (pl. *maṣāṭib*), brick bench, 32, 242, 281
mikḥaleh, bottle for *koḥl*, 59
mughreh, red ochre, 146
moiyeh, water; *moiyet el-malāyikeh*, water of the angels, 78
mubārakīn, blessed ones; used euphemistically of the *'afārīt*, 229
mueddin, officiant (often blind) who chants the call to prayer from the mosque, 31, 172, 308 f.
muḥarraṣ, made into little cakes; descriptive of the way in which a boy's hair is cut by the barber before he undergoes circumcision, 87
mūlid (pl. *mawālid*), festival, 81, 83, 244 ff., 252 ff.; *Mūlid en-Nebi*, Festival of the Prophet—*i.e.*, the annual celebration of the Prophet's birthday, 252
mūṣ, very finely chopped straw, 149

N

nāb, double tooth, 66
nabbūt (pl. *nabābīt*), single-stick, 129, 131, 133
nadam, single-membrane drum, 265, 267
nahār, day; *Nahārak sa'īd*, Good day!, 120
nāi, kind of flute, 167
nebi, prophet, 79, 220 f.
nōrag, threshing-machine, 173
nūr, light; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262

R

rashād, nasturtium, 204
rashteh, macaroni cooked in milk, 175 f.
raṭl, a weight of rather more than 1 lb., 64
rōḥ, soul, 110 f., 118, 237

S

sabt, sabbath; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262
sādif, implement used in pottery-making, 152
sa'īd, happy; *Nahārak sa'īd*, Good day!, 120
semn, clarified butter used in cooking, 167, 195
sibākh, earth from rubbish mounds used as a fertilizer, 156
sibḥeh, rosary, 114
sitt, lady, 69, 118

Ṣ

A very strong sibilant pronounced well back in the mouth.

ṣabī, lad, 51
ṣabr, aloes, 116, 242
ṣalla, bless!; *Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*, Bless the Prophet, 79, 220 f.
ṣughaiyar, little, small, 259, 298
ṣulḥeh, peace-making feast held by persons who have appeased the sheikh or sheikhs by whom they were possessed, 186 f., 199 f.

SH

shā, he hath willed; *Mā shā Allāh*, What God willeth is, 220 f.
shādūf (pl. *shawādīf*), water-hoist, 170 f., 175, 306 f.
shagareh, tree; designation of special tattoo pattern, 52, 55
shahīd (pl. *shuhadā*), martyr, 121
shemm, (act of) smelling; *Shemm en-Nesīm*, the Smelling of the Zephyr, a festival celebrated in April on the first day of the *Khamasīn*,[1] 33, 261
shems, sun, 298

T

tāni, other, second, 63
ta'āla, come!, 51, 124
tibn, finely chopped straw, 149
tōb, outer garment worn by women out of doors, 105
tūtia, sulphate of zinc, 203

[1] See p. 318, note 4.

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104

Ṭ

A strong palatal.

ṭafl, yellow clay used in pottery-making, 146, 151
ṭala', going up; visit (generally weekly) to the cemetery, 117, 263, 298 f., 300
ṭarfā, tamarisk, 188; *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā*, stone of the tamarisk, 203
ṭīn, earth, clay, 62
ṭulū' esh-shems, sunrise, 298

U

ukht (pl. *ikhwāt*), sister; also a personality born simultaneously with each human being, but distinct from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*, 64, 74 ff., 186 f.

W

walad, child, boy, 63
walī, saint,[1] 244

Y

Yā, O (introducing the vocative), 119 f., 151
yōm, day; *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*, the Saturday of the Light, 262; *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, 263, 298

Z

zār, ceremony performed by and for persons possessed by a sheikh or sheikhs, 198 ff.
zarībeh, enclosure for sheep, goats, or cattle, 222
zēy, likeness; *Ēy-zēyak*, How are you?, 120
zikr, religious dance, 255 f., 258
zīr (pl. *ziyār* or *izyār*), large pottery jar in which the household water is stored, 75, 137 f., 149, 151, 153, 220
zummāreh, double-reed-pipe with a drone, 167, 172, 308

A strong guttural of the same nature as ḥ, and peculiar to the Semitic languages.

'afrīt (fem. *'afrīteh*, pl. *'afārīt*), a supernatural being supposed to be made of fire and to dwell underground, *passim* and especially 69 f., 177, 223, 227 ff.; summoned by a magician, 193; ghost, 111, 225, 237
'arīf, cantor in a Coptic church, 125 ff., 234
'arūseh, bride; *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'bride of the corn,' 172 f.
'īd, festival; *el-'Īd es-Ṣughaiyar*, the Little Festival, 259, 298; *el-Īd el-Kibīr*, the Great Festival, 259 f., 298
'irḳ (pl. *'urūḳ*), root; *'urūḳ el-fūweh*, roots of madder, 194
'omdeh, headman of a village, 225, 235 f., 269

[1] See also E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 289.

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[1] Dr G. Scholem refers me to T. Canaan, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914), p. 22, who states that "The tribes of demons are governed by princes. There are seven chief princes. . . . They are called Murrah, Maḏhab, el-Aḥmar, Barḳān, Shemhūrish, el-Abyaḍ, and el-Meimūn." See also E. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du nord* (Algiers, 1909), p. 120.

[2] See note 1. Baraḳān, or Barḳān, means 'Shining One.' He appears as Barakon in an invocation addressed to him in the *Clavicula Salomonis*; see H. Gollancz, *Sepher Maphteah Shelomo* (*Book of the Key of Solomon*), *an exact Facsimile of an original Book of Magic in Hebrew* (Oxford, 1914), pp. xii ff.

[3] For the use of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Égypte antique de l'ancien empire jusqu'à l'époque copte* (Paris, 1925), vol. i, p. 158; vol. ii, pp. 169 f., 171 f., 174 f., 178, 182.

[4] Otherwise not known. He is not included in the well-known list in note 1.

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A
789
776
552
A
[113]

[1] For the use of his name in a charm see F. Lexa, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 177.

[2] For a number of occurrences of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 194 (index); also see F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), p. 135.

[3] Miyemūn (or Meimūn) and Barḳān are, Dr Scholem informs me, the most popular names in North-African Arabic magic. Meimūn occurs in the Greek form Ἀμαιμον, which is found already in the *Testamentum Salomonis*.

[4] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 84; vol. ii, p. 265.

[5] For the occurrence of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 165, 169, 172, 182.

[6] For other occurrences of this angel's name in charms see F. Lexa, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 165, 169, 172.

[7] This name does not occur in the list on p. 321, note 1, and is unknown to Dr Scholem. Mr E. S. Thomas, however, reminded my brother that Ṭarish is mentioned along with an associate Ṭaryūsh in a spell published by E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 339. It is to be noted that Ṭarish (or Ṭarsh, as Lane spells the name) and Ṭaryūsh do not appear in this spell as kings, but Lane states that the magician who wrote it claimed them as his familiar spirits.

[8] This name does not occur in the list on p. 321, note 1. Dr Scholem tells me that Zoba is only known to him in the name Abu Zoba, which is mentioned in the Hebrew *Clavicula Salomonis* (see H. Gollancz, *op. cit.*, folio 36*b*) in a portion that is entirely Arabic in its origin. But there Abu Zoba is one of the three servants of Bargan (= Barḳān), not a king himself.

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[1] My brother informs me that treasure, believed to be hidden in Kōm ed-Dīnār (an ancient rubbish mound) at Ehnāsiyeh el-Medīneh, is likewise supposed to be guarded by a cock.

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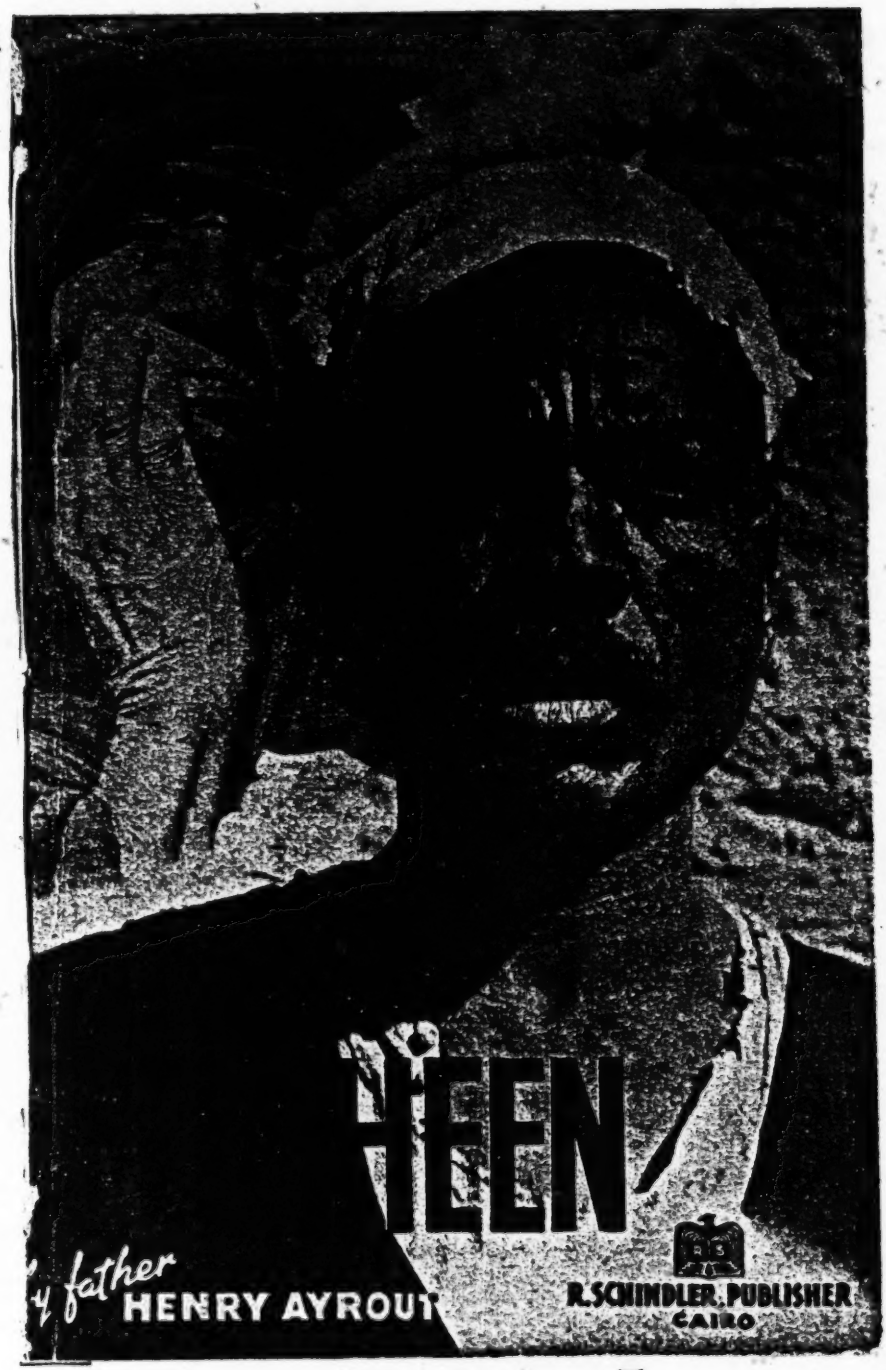

[Front Cover of Book]

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THE FELLAHEEN

BY

HENRY HABIB-AYROUT, S.J.

TRANSLATED

BY

HILARY WAYMENT

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

M. TAHER PASHA

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R. SCHINDLER, PUBLISHER - CAIRO

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FOREWORD

The "Fellaheen" of Egypt are the oldest peasantry in the world. History teaches us this, and also that the Valley of the Nile shows the oldest records of civilised and cultural life. 101

Throughout thousands of years our peasantry has kept its customs, habits, character, and type in a remarkably steady manner. 183

It is still essentially what it was in the far-distant Pharaonic days : one of the two main pillars of Egypt's wealth and well-being. The other, as Herodotus remarked long ago, is the river Nile.

A great deal has been said about the Fellah, particularly during the last few decades, and there is a vast amount of literature about Egypt and its people. Seldom, however, has a writer devoted his main interest to the study of the Egyptian peasant as a human type, looking at him, his character, his culture and traditions, with sympathy, objectivity, and an unbiased view. 114

The present book fills this gap in the literature about our country. We owe its author our sincerest thanks. 000

The more one really studies the Fellaheen of Egypt, the more one will discard a lot of mistaken ideas about their character. Now that the country has come to a turning-point of its history, it is essential that its people as a whole should be fully aware of the tremendous task ahead of them. A complete and intimate collaboration among all classes, a particularly sympathetic understanding — and not just a platonic one — of their peasantry by the upper class and landowners, is the basis and most important element of this patriotic cooperation. The "Fellah", whether as a small — and how small! — landowner or as an agri-

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cultural labourer, is the main factor in the country's welfare and progress. If any of the numerous blueprints piled up in modern, and sometimes luxurious, Government offices are to become realities one day, it will be through the labour of thousands and thousands of Fellaheen. As already remarked, much has been said about the Fellah, but little has been done. It is high time to get to work, wholeheartedly and energetically

To all those who honestly and earnestly desire to serve our country this book will give valuable guidance.

I congratulate the author on his work and wish it the widest possible circulation.

M. Taher Pasha.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In 1938, after having been offered as a thesis for the 114
Doctorate of Letters in the University of Lyons, this book was puplished by Payot, Paris, under the title of MŒURS ET COUTUMES DES FELLAHS.

This work, with an admirable foreword by Monsieur André Allix, based on a real affection for the Egyptian fellah, was the result of many years study and observation of these people. In writing it, our intention was not merely to enlighten and inform, but also to indicate the beginnings of a plan of action.

Today, having under our care a hundred elementary schools in Upper Egypt, and visiting each month many far-distant villages, we aim at putting into practice the fundamental idea set out in this book. In the present education of our fellahs, we strive to draw closer together what we call "Outside Egypt" — ourselves — and "Inside Egypt" — the fellah.

The demand for the book very soon outran the supply, and there was an increasing demand for a new edition. Consequently, in 1942, a revised edition, with a preface by H.E. Fuad Abaza Pasha, was published in Cairo by "Horus" under the title of Fellahs. In the following year there appeared an Arabic translation from the competent pen of Mohammad Ghallab, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Al Azhar. This edition was enriched with many notes by this eminent Professor.

Now, to meet the desire often expressed by English-speaking readers, we publish the present translation, which, although contemplated for some time, has only recently been completed. The translator, Mr Hilary Wayment, is

114 known to many readers here for his book Egypt Now, published during the war. It shows him to be thoroughly conversant with the life and problems of the fellah.

This English edition is a translation of the latest French version, with additional notes. May it enlighten its readers and bring them to an affectionate and helpful understanding of the fellaheen, a people who live under the same skies and on the same soil as ourselves.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

At the end of last century there appeared in France 114
a book entitled *Le Fellah*. This book describes the life of an Egyptian aristocrat educated in France, who precisely because he had lost touch with the fellaheen and was in almost every way their antithesis, took a perverse pride in calling himself a fellah. It is typical of the lack of interest in the fellaheen which most writers about Egypt have shown that this book should have been cited in a whole chain of bibliographies as if it were a fundamental study of the fellaheen and life in the Egyptian countryside. One can only suppose that the writers had never seen a copy of the book, let alone read it.

The fact is that the serious study of rural society in Egypt has only just begun. It is over a century since Lane published his admirable book on *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, but this deals largely with the life of the upper classes in Cairo. After the first World War an Englishwoman, Miss W.M. Blackman, went to live for several years in the Egyptian countryside before writing *The Fellâhîn of Upper Egypt* (Harrap, 1927). But Miss Blackman approached the fellaheen more as an anthropologist than as a sociologist, and was much more impressed by the superstitious practices which bind them to the past than by the actual pattern of their social existence.

Father Ayrout's book first appeared in 1938 under the title *Mœurs et Coutumes des Fellahs* in the *Collection d'études, de documents et de témoignages pour servir à l'histoire de notre temps*, published by Payot, Paris. It was accepted at once, not only in France but also in Egypt, as a standard work on the fellaheen, and in 1942, in response to widespread demand, it was republished by "Horus" of Cairo in a revised edition entitled *Fellahs*.

Father Ayrout was the first to attempt a full-length study of the life of the fellaheen in all its main aspects. Born an Egyptian of Syrian origin, and speaking both French

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114 and Arabic, he has taught for many years in Cairo and paid regular visits to a number of elementary schools in the villages of Upper Egypt. He is thus peculiarly fitted to interpret Egypt to the West, and to describe from within the dusty everyday life of the fellaheen, which ninety-nine Europeans out of a hundred must look upon with distant, alien eyes from the windows of a car or railway-carriage.

114 121 As a social document this book is agreed to have no rival, but its theoretical assumptions and conclusions have proved less generally acceptable. In particular Father Ayrout stresses the changelessness of fellah life, though it would be easy to show that in the century and a half which have passed since Napoleon visited Egypt, there has been a process of economic and technical change in the Egyptian countryside which cannot have left the fellah himself unmoved, and is likely in any case to have far-reaching social effects in the decades to come. I have transgressed the limits of a translator's function in revising a passage at the end of the second chapter in which Father Ayrout argues that over-population cannot prove to be a serious problem in Egypt for at least a generation. If the present social and economic set-up remains unchanged, I am convinced that it will. However, since this book was first written the discovery of high-grade iron ore in the desert near Aswan has changed the whole basis of the argument. It will not be long, one hopes, before the great weight of water sustained by the Aswan Dam can be turned into power serving not only to smelt this iron, but also to feed new factories in the Delta, and in due course provide Egypt with an industrial system as productive as her agriculture. This new wealth will make possible not only a higher standard of life for the fellaheen, but also the provision of those educational facilities without which, as Father Ayrout insists, there can be no real progress in the countryside. The sympathy and goodwill towards the fellaheen which a section of the educated classes in Egypt is already beginning to show will then have wider scope and greater effect. Such changes need not destroy, though they may modify, the organic relationship between the fellah and the soil which Father Ayrout values so much.

It often happens that a whole historical period is summed up in a book written at the moment when that period is

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passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for 114
town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope [21]
that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen.*

* * *

Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have 128
made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning.

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *fellâhîn*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
London 1945

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INTRODUCTION

ON UNDERSTANDING THE FELLAH

A country's peasantry is like the small particles in a sentence, or the strips of leading in a stained-glass window. It binds the nation together, gives it stability and character. It provides that humble but indispensable support on which both economic and social systems rely. By producing more than it consumes, the peasantry maintains society in health, and ensures a sound regularity to the state finances. 182

But the peasantry as a class is composed of separate individuals, of men. Enslaved as they may be to soil and seasons, long-suffering and slow, hide-bound and unprogressive as they appear to us, it is these people above all others who deserve the name of men. 565 182

Too long have we confused the producer with his product and the worker with the fruits of his labour. We have taken our fill of the harvest without a thought for the man who made it grow. We have failed to notice the distress which he himself could not put into words, and perhaps only half felt. And so today we are astonished at the reawakening of the peasantry, and realise with a shock of surprise what a dead weight of ignorance has been allowed to accumulate, both in official circles and in society at large, about the man of the soil. 114

By developing the themes of pastoralism and of natural beauty, and so confounding the peasant with his background, poets and artists of all ages, from Virgil to the present day, have conspired to draw a veil of illusion over the realities of country life. They have given us wonderful pictures, to be sure, but in so doing they have accustomed us to see in country life nothing but its picturesque and sentimental side, to find in an image the whole reality. The "sower's

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114 splendid gesture" has hidden from us the sower, the man himself.

This deformation is especially prevalent in the case of Egypt. In following year by year the books published on this subject in Paris alone, I have been particularly struck by it. French writers of the present day, continuing an established tradition, find Egypt a mine of interest. Between 1926 and 1937, for example, French publications on Egypt amounted to about forty novels and new travel books, not to mention a vast number of articles in newspapers and periodicals, appearing in France itself, as well as all the essays published in Egypt and elsewhere.

Now this vast mass of print, interesting as it is from many points of view, represents little more than an elegantly painted backcloth, a landscape with human figures superimposed. The fellah is never completely forgotten. He earns a few lines here, a page or two there. But he is always regarded superficially, from the outside. In any case he is not a very prominent character, and barely stands out from his background, the soil.

The result is that from such writings we shall learn a great deal about the prostitutes' quarters and the palaces of Cairo and Alexandria, something about the Pyramids, the museums and temples, the mosques and bazaars, rather less about economic and social affairs, and next to nothing about the man who is the very linch-pin of Egyptian society — the fellah.

Scientific writers about Egypt have been no less neglectfull of the fellah than men of letters. The artist looks only at the landscape, the scientist at the land, while to both the peasant remains secondary. This criticism applies to the agriculturalists, the economists, and even the geographers, who have contributed so richly to our land knowledge of Egypt.

The works on agriculture by Audebeau and Mosséri, on irrigation by Willcocks and Barois, on the Nile by Prince Omar Toussoun, on landed property by Artin Pasha, Arminjon and Minost, on the geography of Egypt by Cerviller and Hug are indeed authoritative. They do not fail to mention the fellah, but only as a detail subordinate to their main preoccupations. He is considered only in relation to rext page

nuring, harvesting or irrigation, land-ownership, taxation or the yield per acre. 114

There seemed room, therefore, for a study of the fellah himself which would show him first and foremost as a human being, and consider all these other factors not as he influences them, but as they affect him. This change of perspective should make for a better understanding of Egypt as a whole. 114 121

But the land itself is nothing. Geography may have a place here, but it will be human geography: *homo additus naturae*. And man comes first. Such is human geography as Vidal de la Blache understood it; a science including explanation as well as description, and bordering on psychology and sociology. So without ever separating the tiller of the soil from the earth which sustains and feeds him — for that would be a mutilation — we shall make him the focus of our study.

Our aim then is to portray the fellah's background and the fellah in person; to photograph the very life of these men who humanise the soil of Egypt and in their turn become almost a part of it; and to attempt a description of the contacts which explain their character and personality. 121

To save time, a familiarity with the main facts of the history of Egypt and the outlines of its geography will be taken for granted. A number of excellent works on these subjects have recently been published.

Our enquiry is limited to the fellah in the strict sense of the term, that is to say the farm labourer and small farmer, and does not touch the small craftsmen or the boatmen on the Nile. These are also fellaheen in origin, but their specialisation has given them a different way of life, which deserves a separate study.

We shall speak of the past only when it is necessary, for we are concerned with the fellah as he is today. The present, as we shall soon see, includes the past.

The bibliography, which does not claim to be exhaustive, mentions only those works to which the author has referred for specific points. Egyptian books and periodicals have been preferred where possible, since even if they are not always sufficiently concise or scientific they see Egypt from within, and the information they give, while leaving room for critical discrimination, is at least first-hand.

121 At the same time the author's conclusions are based principally on personal observation over a period of years in various provinces of the Nile Valley. They are based, too, on personal intercourse with people of every rank, and on reflection upon things actually seen and heard.

Thus the work now laid before the public is the result of careful observation and study. This fact has made the writer all the more conscious of its deficiencies.

It is to be hoped, however, that this book will help to raise the question of the fellah in all its seriousness, and so encourage a deeper comprehension of this ancient country.

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CHAPTER I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers 101
of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, 161
represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, 101
or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has 175
lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, 175
their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. 178
From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of [636]
the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, 181
but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned [651 669] the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrizi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

Here lies the heart of the problem. How are we to 178
explain this physical stability, this changelessness both mental and social, this enduring and extraordinary sameness in a people ?

The answer lies in the soil. The uniformity of Egyptian 178
art is to be explained by its assimilation to the natural 121
environment. The level ridges and steep cliffs on the edge of the Arabian and the Libyan deserts have produced the long, low, solid outline of the Pharaonic temples, as well as the regular cornice which finishes them. The papyrus, lotus, or reed which grew along the Nile were stylised in the pillars and capitals which we now call papyriform, lotiform, or proto-Doric.

For ages past an intimate bond, which successive masters of Egypt have used all their powers to draw even tighter, has existed in the Nile Valley, between nature and the human mind.

The fellah stands between the hammer and the anvil, 178
between the soil and the masters of the soil. Yet by the very 121
nature of his life he remains nearer to it than to them; and 181
their hammer-blows beat him yet closer to the ground. This union is so real that the fellah's masters, who are also the owners of the soil, through owning the soil also own the fellah. Thus the fellaheen owe their astonishing uniformity and stability to their close association with an element no less uniform and stable, namely the soil of Egypt. There has grown up between these two a bond which is at once firm and elastic; a balanced and self-sufficient interdependence which no crisis or government can disturb. Here is, in the words of Sully-Prudhomme, "that stern, immemorial wedlock of a land and a people which have made each other". This unbroken contact of people and land has caused a perpetual interplay of action and reaction, of likeness and difference, which strengthens the indissoluble union of the two. On the one hand, we have nature, the physical environment in its broader sense, that is to say the climate and the sunshine and above all the water and loam of the Nile, its flora and its enveloping sands. On the other hand we have man, the social element, that is to say the fellah class, shut in no less by its habits than by its villages; dense, gregarious, but isolated and unorganised, closer to the soil, which it understands, than to the State, of which it knows nothing.

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes
121 these classes less stable, but more progressive.

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

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CHAPTER II

THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY

I. – Geography

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There has been much talk of the industrialisation of Egypt. The progress of the last five years is as widespread as it has been rapid. An industrial proletariat has emerged, a native working class, which is worthy of study. But the absence of iron and coal mines has prevented this country from becoming, properly speaking, an industrial centre, and even from being able to satisfy the needs of its own population in manufactured goods. It is and will be for some time to come primarily an agricultural country. This results from its physical structure ([a]).

E F 133 134

By reason of its flat surface, its rich, damp loam, its fertilising river, and its warm, dry climate, Egypt is geographically suited for wide and intensive cultivation, and its soil can bear crop after crop without failing.

Were it not for the fertilising Nile, the one artery of life which flows across this desert area of Africa, Egypt, like her neighbours Arabia and Libya, would be little more than a vast expanse of sand, granite, and limestone, in itself useless for either agriculture or industry, — a poverty-stricken land of nomads and shepherds.

Though the Nile has its source outside the land of Egypt, it is to Egypt that its fullness belongs. It enters her boundaries after a journey of 3,000 miles with a rich load of silt drawn from the most varied types of soil. It renews itself year after year, and its rise and fall is the pulse of Egypt's life.

The silt, brought from the south and carried down on the flood, has been deposited by the Nile in alluvial strata,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

since the last phase of the quaternary period, over the flat edges of its bed, and spread out in ever widening layers across its mouth, encroaching on the sea (*). E F 133 134

These deposits have created on top of the granite, limestone or sand a layer of black earth, varying in depth between 10 to 30 metres in different regions.

The Nile soil which thus covers the valley consists of both coarse and colloidal clay, with an admixture of various salts. It is an amalgam of finely ground particles carried down by the Blue and White Niles. The composition of this arable soil, unlike that of most agricultural countries, is substantially the same everywhere. It has a high mineral content, which, as we shall see later, has an important influence on the food of the fellah.

This soil, once deposited, is continually irrigated and enriched by the Nile, by means of either flooding or canalisation, but always under the control of man. The time-honoured system of basin irrigation, still in use over a million feddans, consists in discharging the water at flood-time through small channels on to *hôds* — vast areas of land surrounded by dykes. The land absorbs water until it is saturated; then the remainder slowly drains away, after depositing a layer of the fine silt with which the water was laden before flowing into the basins. Each feddan thus receives about 7,000 cubic metres of water, which leave 8 or 9 tons of silt. Immediately after the water is drained off (about November) the crops are sown. They are then left to ripen until harvest-time without needing any further irrigation. The land then lies fallow till the next flood. However, many of those who farm basin land, in order to produce a summer as well as a winter crop, make use of the underground water by means of pumps, which are now so common that they have modified the system of cultivation in these districts. F 134 312 241

The perennial system of irrigation, introduced in 1840, and made possible through engineering works, of which the most notable is the Aswan Dam, now covers all the Delta and the greater part of Upper Egypt (4,300,000 feddans). The Nile no longer completely floods the land. Its water is stored in reservoirs, then distributed through barrages into a network of canals which water the land throughout the year. F 312

241 132 Thus at High Nile (August to October) the fields are no longer flooded, but only irrigated, and bear the crops called *nili*. When the flood is over, and the level of the flood is falling (November to April), the land, being still moist, receives sufficient water for the winter crop (*shetwi*). At Low Nile (April to July) the reservoirs are gradually emptied to provide water for ripening a third crop, called the summer crop (*séfi*).

132 134 To be fruitful, the land needs not only water, but also air. The sun, by the vertical cracks its summer heat makes in the level soil, plays its part in reviving the fallow land. It removes excess salt and mellows the soil by letting the air penetrate deeply into the earth, so that the land is dehydrated and renewed (').

We thus see the Nile, helped by the sun, already at work preparing and cultivating the land, and so determining the fellah's physical environment, the living Egypt.

133 In fact, wherever the Nile does not penetrate, either from above or below, the desert begins abruptly, without any intermediate zone. The conventional colourings of maps, which show Egypt as a thin green strip across a great dun-coloured space, correspond exactly with reality. From the top of the Great Pyramid near Cairo, or from the hills of the Sa'îd (*), one is struck, whichever way one looks, by the clear line of demarcation where human labour and habitation stop short. Between the cliffs of the Libyan and Arabian deserts lies a level valley, 650 miles in length. Its width is less than a mile at Wadi-Halfa (*), 3 miles at Edfu, about 8 between Luxor and Assiut, where it narrows again, and 15 at Beni-Suef, whence a branch goes off westward to the Fayûm. From Cairo it spreads out fanwise to form a coast-line of 160 miles at the north of the Delta. In all there are some 12,000 square miles of good land, lying in the midst of about 400,000 square miles of barren sand. This 3 % of the whole area represents the living and productive Egypt.

Its shape is given to it by the Nile. It looks like a giant lotus, whose roots, the White and the Blue Nile, are planted in the heart of Africa, in the high mountains of Abyssinia and the great lakes of the Congo. From Khartoum the sap rises along a single stem, which pushes into Egypt at Wadi-Halfa, shows signs of green at Aswan, bears a single leaf

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2. — Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

F 162 241 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 175 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus (10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

E F 161 511 In point of fact, once order and public security were re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E F 161 162 The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000 inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([13]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([13]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([14]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

121 The aim of this chapter was not to re-formulate the geography and ethnography of Egypt; for that it would need to be considerably amplified, and illustrated with maps. It was meant to reveal the interdependence of land and people, and so lead to the study of the men who make the land what it is, and are to some extent moulded by it themselves — the fellaheen.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN OLIGARCHY

In Egyptian politics and society the peasantry has always constituted the primal mass, and as it were the raw material; the foundation, almost the sub-soil, on which government and society are based. This double structure must now be considered before we can look more closely at the fellah's way of life. EF 565

The façade of contemporary Egypt, modern and composite in style, is represented by the country's three great cities with their striking, many-sided activity. There is Cairo, with its two universities (having nearly 20,000 students), its palaces and museums, its scientific institutions, its international congresses and winter lecture-courses. There is Alexandria, with its busy port and Cotton Exchange, its foreign institutions, its fashionable beaches and esplanade. There is Port Said, gateway to the East, with the Suez Canal and all its traffic. These cities compose a sort of triptych, in which large and varied groups standing side by side conceal the fundamental Egypt, just as the stones of a mosaic hide the grey cement which supports them. EF 369

Just as it was once usual to speak of 'All the Russias', so today, from a social point of view, one might well talk of Egypt in the plural. There is no single Egyptian people, in the usual literary or historical sense of this word, but only a seething assemblage of the most varied types, which has no real correspondence with the country itself. Neither is there a true peasant community, but only a homogeneous mass of peasants bound to the soil and isolated in their villages. EF 101

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E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city 563] except through the '*omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's 443] agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the E 563 separate circle of the Princes.

Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([15]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

421 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Egypt MR1

Turkish Egypt MR2

In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*). E F 423

The State and the Land

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In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

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Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

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In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

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423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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661 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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651 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarcation. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name ([14]).

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34 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Government already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

based on the same scale of value, varies between 14 and 164 piastres.

Law No. 113, of 1939, fixed the new tax at 16% of the rentable value of the land, according to estimates made throughout the country by special commissions, and based on the average rentals for the previous ten years. However, as before, the maximum tax cannot exceed 164 piastres per feddan.

There was no change in the date-palm tax, which until 1920 stood at 21 piastres per tree, with a five-yearly census; or in the irrigation tax, viz 50 piastres per feddan where *sêfi* irrigation could be carried out by natural means (free flow), and 30 piastres for land to which the water had to be raised by mechanical means (lift flow).

Rebates are provided for when crops have deteriorated owing to lack of water, or where irrigation would have been unduly expensive. The tax is payable by the owner alone.

The date of payment, as well as the rate, is fixed beforehand. It varies for each province, according to the times of the main harvests, and payments are made by instalments, so that at the end of the year the whole amount due for the 24 kirats composing each feddan is paid up. For example in Qalioubiya two parts are payable in January, three in March, three in April, eight in October and eight in November.

The tax is collected at the owner's house by a *sarraf*, and the demand note (*wird*), when countersigned, serves as a receipt. If, as often happens, payments are in arrears, the Government obtains payment by distraint and forced sale. For example, to take the *Journal Officiel* for January 1937 only, there are 732 seizures listed, almost all of quite small holdings. These seizures are always advertised in the same terms:

'January 19, 1937. 3 kirats belonging to Imam Imam Ibrahim, situated in the village of Kafr Mansour, Toukh Markaz, in Medawwar *hôd* No. 4, Lot 19, seized according to *procès-verbal* of March 2, 1936, in payment of arrears. Price L.E. 9.600 for the portion seized.'

The Government shows more patience with big landowners. 'It is not just', a *sarraf* once admitted to me. In practice there may be injustice, but the rate of taxation is quite just, and except in times of crisis not unduly high.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (").
This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market. E F 423 794 429

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life. F [461]

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans. F 423

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners. E F 423 643

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which should take into consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *izba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee landlords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

423 Small properties do not result solely from the sub-
425 division of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of
426 tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best
425 price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is
426 an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for
556 L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

656 The Government, by its control of the land, and still
[312] more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

In Upper Egypt, strung out along the Nile Valley, are 635
eight more provinces, named with one exception after their chief towns (*bandars*). These are, from north to south, Giza, Beni-Suef, Fayûm, Minia, Assiut, Girga, Qena and Aswan.

At the head of each province, called *mudiriya*, is a high official called the *mudîr*. His authority comes directly from the Ministry of the Interior, and he is frequently transferred. If he distinguishes himself he is brought nearer the capital, or even becomes a minister. On the other hand, if he falls out of favour he may be sent further south. He settles as the Government's representative in the more or less important but never very attractive town which is the capital of his *mudiriya*. As he is naturally more in touch with great men than with small, he has no direct knowledge of the fellaheen, who moreover cannot come into direct contact with him. They hear him spoken of, pay the taxes due to him, and catch a glimpse of him when an official visit brings him to their village. They think of him as being of a higher race than themselves, and revere him as a kind of demi-god. To them he seems all-powerful.

Outside the chief town the Mudeer's authority is exer- 634
cised by Maamûrs. Each *mudiriya* is divided into *markaz* or 625
police districts, from three to seven in number, except for Gharbiya, the most densely populated, which has twelve. The *maamûr*, a kind of chief constable, controls a police force distributed among the principal villages of his *markaz*. He is an executive officer enjoying very wide powers. The fellah thinks them unlimited, and has a corresponding respect for the man who exercises them.

The Maamûr is the fellah's king. The story is told of a fellah who said to the Khedive 'Abbas, in all good faith: 'God save you, and make you our *maamûr*.'

Yet even the *maamûr* does not know the fellaheen, their affairs, or their families, except through the *omda*. And the limited knowledge which the fellah has of politics or administration — citizen and voter though he be — comes to him through his *omda*, who for him is the sum of the law.

Each of the 4,000 villages of Egypt is governed by an 622
omda or mayor. He is nominated from among the leading inhabitants of the village which he rules and of which he often owns a part. Indeed he cannot be a candidate for

622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffirs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the
692 value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various
624 privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffirs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who
622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial,
692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*,
695 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con-
[681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffirs*.'

622 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine
692 up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

'omda's house takes its place. All day long he is receiving 622
petitioners or travellers, unless he is going the rounds with 692
some official or inspecting his own fields. He pays frequent visits to the chief town of the district, either for business or for pleasure.

This uncontrolled system, though it has many advantages 692
for the Government, is full of drawbacks for the fellah, 578
abandoned as he is to a master who knows no more about administration than about justice. There are indeed exceptions, but they are as yet few. The system is also prejudicial to public security. Crimes may easily be concealed, or even foisted upon the innocent, by such an autocracy. Village feuds usually owe their origin and persistence to the rivalries aroused by this office.

At Nahyet el Barûd, in the *markaz* of Abu Tîg, a new 622
'omda was to be nominated. Among the candidates for the 666
position two were outstanding, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Zeid and Sheikh Ahmed Farghali. One of these had been dismissed from the post by official action; the other, who had been *omda* in 1931, had also been dismissed by the Nessim Pasha Ministry. Both candidates were much feared in the district, and each had a large band of supporters. The committee which had to count the votes and then decide the election was formed of the *maamûr*, representatives of the neighbouring villages, and the *maazûn* of the village itself. However, the eligibility of the *maazûn*, as being a relative of one of the candidates, was challenged by the other. The authorities of the *markaz* then let it be known that the *maazûn* of another village would sit in his place. But on the day of the election, which was to be decided by a show of hands, it was seen that the first *maazûn* was still on the committee. His enemy's supporters objected, while his own friends upheld him, and the two parties came to blows. Worse than this, they made use of whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and a savage battle ensued. Before the police could intervene, three men had been killed and a number of others seriously wounded. The authorities arrested both candidates. The *mudîr* of Assiut gave orders that elections at Nahyet el Barûd and the neighbouring villages should be suspended until order was re-established (11th July, 1937).

Towards his superiors, whether officials or landlords, the 181
fellah adopts an attitude of awesome respect, of servility

181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *mudiwen* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [19].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture /21
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most /01
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is /86
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and /21
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double /83
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting /34
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in /32
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
6.31 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

and allow it to germinate before the top layer dries. This 407
plough is also appropriate when as a result of a limited water 241
supply the task is to prevent a premature drying-out of the soil. None of the imported ploughs tested hitherto has proved genuinely superior to the local plough, when mechanical, agricultural and economic factors are taken into account.'

The Egyptian plough is the resultant of two interacting factors, the nature of the soil and the means of the fellah (it costs no more than P.T. 100). Its mechanism is so simple that it does not have the effect of dispensing with the ploughman's effort or of putting a distance between him and his furrow; so contact between man and soil remains close.

To level down the tops of the furrows and break up the clods of earth the fellah uses a *zahhâfa*. This is nothing but a rough beam of wood, or the trunk of a palm tree, about twelve feet long, on which the fellah stands while it is pulled by a pair of draught-animals. This very primitive instrument thus acts both as roller and harrow, and is sometimes used also to cover in the seed sown by hand. The *zahhâfa* is used after ploughing, and about four feddans can be treated in a day.

To level the land, which since it is artificially irrigated must be as even as possible, the fellah uses his *kassâbia*, a sort of coffer weighing about 120 lbs and costing about [435]
75 piastres. It has two sides, is open along the front, and is held by two handles, which the fellah raises in order to scrape off the mounds and fill up the hollows with the earth thus picked up.

The *gamoossa* and the donkey have often been mentioned, 291
and will continue to be, for they are the two chief aids of the fellah, and are well adapted both to his needs and to Egyptian conditions.

The *gamoossa*, the poor man's cow, is a mud-coloured buffalo, stronger than the ox, and extremely resistant to disease. It must have more fodder than any other draught animal. On account of its great usefulness the fellah takes more care of it than he does of himself, which is not saying much.

If properly fed, the *gamoossa* gives more milk than any cow in Egypt. In winter and spring it needs to graze

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rolls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [262] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *bàladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double 312
gangs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the [805]
bank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull
up the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those
on the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further
aside.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the 312
water reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of 461
runnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is cease- 241
lessly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller
channels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—
five days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen
at low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order
to lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through
the channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles.
But the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, accord-
ing to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by
hand. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the
simplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his
field, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The
first way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank 241
at water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they 312
support a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and
10 ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and
more or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning
towards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a
second movement they straighten themselves, turn to the
field, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of
their forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation
channel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity,
brings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the
arms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot
bear it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly [461]
two pairs work turn and turn about.

241 It has been calculated that by this method little more
312 than 200 cubic feet of water, or enough for about one acre, can be raised in a day of twelve hours. Such a yield bears no reasonable proportion to the effort exerted, but the instrument is extremely cheap. As long as poverty remains, such methods will continue in use.

This method is called *nattâla*. It was already known to the fellaheen of Ancient Egypt [22] and is used by Japanese peasants, for example on Shikoku.

Second Method

One or two men crouch at the water's edge, turning and turning the crank handle of a wooden cylinder, which reaches from water level to the mouth of the runnel. The water rises spirally inside this cylinder, which is about 18 ins. across. This is the *tambour* or Archimedean screw, a wooden cylinder hooped with iron and about six or nine feet in length, according as it is turned by one or two men. The spiral is fixed between the inside wall and an iron axis, one end of which is bent into a crank, while the other turns on a stake fixed under water.

The *tambour* can irrigate two or three times as much as a *nattâla*, but it costs more and is heavier to work. Moreover, since it requires the continual use of the forearm, it is very much more tiring. Nevertheless it is still much in use, and may frequently be seen.

These two kinds of water-lifting machinery are practicable when the water level is not very low, but sometimes water has to be sought three, six or even thirty feet below the level of the field to be irrigated.

The easiest thing would be to instal a pumping engine. There are many of these on the large estates, but none on small properties; for as the fellaheen are numerous and
[181 conservative, poor in money and rich in time, this "con-
183] venience" does not commend itself to them. They solved the watering problem ages ago in a way which matches their means, and they feel no need to desert their present system for one which may possibly be better, but which is as yet new and untried.

To raise water from a depth of more than three feet the fellah uses a method as primitive as it is simple. He plants

in the earth, at the water's edge, two stakes about five feet 241
high and a yard apart. When wood is scarce, these two 312
pillars are made of cane or maize stalks daubed over with mud. They are joined at the top by a horizontal bar, like the crossbar of a goalpost. At the middle of this crossbar is balanced a lever more or less straight and about ten feet long. Its shorter arm bears a heavy rock or a great lump of dried mud, and at the end of the longer arm hang two or three yards of rope carrying a bucket, leather basket or old petrol can. This apparatus is placed in the same axis as the channel to be filled.

The fellah stands on a platform made halfway up the bank and pulls down the balanced pole until the bucket dips into the water and fills itself. A slight upward push, helped by the counterweight, brings it just above the runnel, into which it is emptied. All these movements are slow and rhythmic, sometimes accompanied by a droning chant. [533] Their variety might seem to lessen the effort, and yet the fellah finds this task more gruelling than any other. This is the impression one would gather from the melancholy tone of his chant, and it is confirmed by those who have had the patience to collect the words of such songs ([23]).

By the end of a twelve-hour day two fellaheen working alternately in two- or three-hour shifts may succeed in watering about 1/8 acre of cultivated land. One apparatus of this kind suffices for the cultivation of a feddan. The water may be taken from a well or a pool.

This method is widespread amongst the poor peasantry of the East and Far East, especially the Arabs. But the system originated in Egypt. It may be seen depicted on the oldest bas-reliefs, and nowhere else is it so much in use.

The *shadûf*, as it is called, may be used in combination. In the region of Qena and Dendera, in Upper Egypt, you may still see sets of two, three or four of these apparatus used together or in series, to raise the water from a depth. But when the level is very low the *saqia* is more often used.

The *saqia* is really a machine, though clumsy and primitive. It is made from acacia or sycamore wood and driven not by manpower but by beasts.

The great horizontal wheel, turned anti-clockwise by a harnessed ox or donkey, engages with its rough cogs a vertical

241 312 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth downward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 476] A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20, according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is [887 857] left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious watering raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 134

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bàladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semàd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semàd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer, febrayer, mâris, abrîl, myo, yûnyo, yûlyo, oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

348 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 372] which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 439] Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle-class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 242] attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley ; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

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731
651
[652]

it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton (29). The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen (30). Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_2$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

427 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken
511 from us, we will steal." ([22])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen
554 possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number
183 own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as
651 a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last
452 usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows
427 from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are
423 like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([23]).

432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

fellaheen of every other category see snatched from their 423 432 hands; he can sell his few *cantars* of this precious crop for his own profit.

One feddan, on which he has spent about 30 piastres for 432 seed, 100 piastres for chemical manure, and 70 piastres for 434 taxes, irrigation, and petty expenses, may bring him in L.E. 10. If he is pressed for money the fellah sells his cotton at once to the money-lending merchant in his village, who takes advantage of the seller's need, of his ignorance of market fluctuations, and of the multitude of similar offers, to buy at the lowest price. If the fellah is more intelligent, he can take his cotton to the *halaqa*, or cotton market, of the neighbouring town. There, since 1912, weights and prices have been controlled by the Government, and buyers cannot trick the sellers.

When his need of money is less imperious, the small farmer does not sell his cotton immediately it is picked. He stores it in the *shoona* of a big landowner, a bank or a cotton firm, against an advance with which he can pay his most pressing debts. Offers to purchase are made at this store in piastres per *cantar*.

Sometimes the cotton is bought in advance; that is to say on sowing, the small farmer promises to deliver to so-and-so such-and-such a quantity of a given quality. The price is fixed either at the time, or on 'contract terms'. This means that it is based on a fixed minimum with a premium depending on the market value at Alexandria on whatever day suits the seller, provided that it be within the period agreed on at the time of contract.

Yet all these precautions intended to protect the smallholder cannot prevent him from being defrauded sadly often in the sale of his cotton, owing to his ignorance and individualism. It is the same with his other crops.

The *Crédit Agricole*, for example, makes advances on wheat, though only to small farmers, until they can sell their crops at the best price. So far so good. But the village middlemen can easily persuade the *omda* to give them certificates proving that they are also cultivators. They then buy corn at P.T. 120 an ardeb from the true fellaheen, who, not knowing where else to turn for money to pay their taxes, are glad to be able to sell. At the beginning of harvest this may seem a good bargain. But an *ardeb* is 175 kg.

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

131 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural 594
unit.

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594
His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231
at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241
look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461
gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help' to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511
strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434
most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given):

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

511 why the balance of the fellah's budget is so easily upset,
434 and that is why he is so often swamped by debts and interest.

454 If in any given year, by a stroke of good fortune, none
181 of these extraordinary expenses befall him, the fellah, hoarding piastre after piastre in a pot hidden in the earth, can at last see his dream come true, and buy a *gamoossa* or a few *kirats* of land. It is this alluring possibility, always just round the corner, which makes him continue year after year, like the soil and with the soil, the same unwearying work.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter V

THE FELLAH AS A PERSON

We have seen that the fellah's work consists entirely 142
of physical labour and brings his whole body into play. Let us now consider the labourer himself, and examine the fellah from the physical point of view, his race, type, clothing, habits and so on. We shall find once again that water, soil and sun are the physical agents which explain and often even determine the physical constitution of the fellah.

Despite this dependence on the material environment, the liberty of the human will introduces an element of variety. But the will in its turn is subject to another factor, conformity to tradition, and this in the end produces the same result — stability.

(1) *Race and Type*

To what race does the modern fellah belong, and what 144
is his genealogy and origin? No final answer has as yet 174
been found to these questions. Nevertheless, any amount research has been done on the subject, and any number of theories, serious or not, evolved to explain the facts.

To go back no further than the eighteenth century, Volney, for example, declares the fellaheen to be of negroid extraction. Vivant Denon suggests a Caucasian origin. Poinsinet de Sivry, following Pliny the Younger, believes them descended from the Celts. Winckelman suggests Chinese immigration as a solution, and Moreau de Jonnes would put the cradle of the Egyptian race as far away as Polynesia.

Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century, with more knowledge and plausibility, sought a key to the problem nearer Egypt, either in Africa or in Asia.

The theory of African origin is upheld by Hartmann, and later by Flinders Petrie and Maspero, who class the Egyptians with the Ethiopians. Chantre, after anthropo-

144 metric research covering thousands of types both past and
174 present, concludes that the Egyptians, although not absolutely native to their present soil, are essentially Africans, of Libyan extraction, and that if there was any Asiatic infiltration, it had no influence on the race. ([illegible])

Schweinfurth, relying on botanical evidence, believes Southern Arabia to be the source of the Egyptian race, while Amelineau, de Rougé, and (more authoritatively) J. de Morgan, who supports his theory by the comparative study of language, art, customs and physical characteristics, consider Chaldea to be a more likely source. ([illegible])

The theory now in favour, because it is less simple, may be nearer the truth. It can be summed up thus: — In prehistoric times Asiatic invaders, perhaps Arabs or Babylonians, conquered the Nile Valley, and intermingled as the predominant race with people already established there, a composite stock of natives and Ethiopians.

This theory is a synthesis of the two earlier hypotheses, and has the advantage of taking into account facts which support both of them while allowing of the inclusion of the Egyptians in the family of *homo mediterraneus*, a compound of Semitic and Hamitic stocks which peoples North Africa, a great part of Hither Asia, and the shores of the Mediterranean, and shows, where it borders on the black races, certain affinities with the Ethiopians.

The study of profiles in ancient frescoes, and of skeletons discovered in a variety of excavations, obliges us none the less to recognise three original types: the Semites, long-skulled and of medium height; the Mediterraneans, short-skulled, with a short, straight nose; the Libyans, snub-nosed and short-skulled. But the climate and agricultural life have worn away these differences between indigenous and foreign elements and created a specifically Egyptian stock which is no less indivisible than the Nile Valley itself.

174 However all this may be, and although we may not
175 know precisely where the Ancient Egyptians came from, we can be quite sure that the present inhabitants of the country — or at least the fellaheen, and it is with them that we are concerned — are descended from the Egyptians of dynastic times, with whom they are linked without a break and almost without intermixture, despite the passage of fifty centuries and conquest after conquest from abroad.

The conditions of servitude and contempt in which the native 174
population has been held by foreign conquerors since the 175
decline of the Pharaohs have had the effect of preserving the race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, French and English have in this matter all followed the same policy. They have laid hold on the riches of Egypt, and taken power in order to do so, but have neither associated with nor supplanted the fellaheen who produce the wealth. Egypt has always been too densely populated to be suitable for colonial expansion. The conquerors have never been numerous enough to modify the race of the conquered. Their manner of life has always been different, and contact with them has only aroused antagonism.

There has, however, been some penetration of nomads and negroes from near areas. After the Moslem conquest in the seventh century a number of Arabs settled in Egypt, not only in the towns but also in the countryside. As conquerors they were able to impose on the native inhabitants their language, their religion, some of their customs with regard to women, and their cruelty in vengeance. In spite of this the original inhabitants, a hundred times more numerous, especially in the countryside, with women stronger and more fertile, and a manner of life so persistent and unchanging, have marked the Arab elements with their own stamp. In establishing themselves on the black soil the Arabs adopted the traditions of those who ploughed it. This is still noticeable even today in the villages of the Upper Delta, where on account of the richness of the soil Arab immigration was heavier, and in hamlets recently settled on the edge of the desert. After three or four generations the scion can no longer be distinguished from the stock, or else it has proved too dissimilar to take the graft. Assimilation to type is in fact consequent upon assimilation of the fellah way of life. The Arabs who have remained nomadic, and live by the transport of cotton on camel-back, by pasturing flocks, or by robbery and murder,—those in fact known in Egypt as Bedouin, — differ markedly from the fellaheen by their finer features and their more excitable temperament.

Another fusion has taken place in the south, between 174
fellaheen and negroes. Here, the two elements being more 174
dissimilar, the mixture is more noticeable, but the Egyptian 175

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F
144 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption
174 of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat
175 similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

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144 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns,
779 where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while
186 the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F
142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (")

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [288]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it (27). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to 587 clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming 515 out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* (28) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions (20). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a 465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (**).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take 461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply ([41]).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 30
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (*). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare- 744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

up and is transmitted in water and sodden ground, in the stagnant village ponds, and, since the development of perennial irrigation, in the standing water of runnels and badly levelled canals. /164

Bilharzia is not in itself a serious disease. But, beginning with the passing of blood in the urine, it often develops, through lack of attention, into complications such as the stone, fistula, and ulceration of the penis. The infection may reach the kidneys, the liver and even the eyes. Above all, it lasts for 18 or 20 years. 90% of the male fellaheen are affected by it and become accustomed to passing blood and feeling continually below par.

Bilharzia is transmitted through urine and water; hookworm through earth and excrement. Like bilharzia, hookworm is a collective disease, a permanent epidemic, and is introduced into the system by a parasite which passes through the skin. Ankylostomiasis is less widespread than bilharzia, but more dangerous, since it consumes the red corpuscles of the blood (11).

As the fellaheen never make use of human dung, and have never learnt the use of latrines, they relieve themselves no matter where. If they are already infected with the worm, every such place is a new source of danger to their fellows, who walk barefoot or lie down heedlessly on the ground. The worm can move several feet in the darkness; it settles in damp soil, whence it passes through the skin to the intestines. /514 /164 [24]

You may see countless men and women in the prime of life who are stricken with this disease, their faces puffy and lifeless with its ravages. Neither their vigorous constitution, their youth, nor the treatment they receive has been able to save them. /164

Malaria, spread by the ricefields and *birkas*, affects 65% of the fellaheen, and in some villages East of the Delta as many as 90%.

What makes these three diseases so alarming is not so much their inherent seriousness as their constantly widening extent, and the way in which the fellaheen themselves by their work and their manner of life contribute unconsciously to the perpetuation of the evil. It should also be remarked that the Government's measures to combat these diseases have not as yet had very much effect.

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (44).

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.[1] If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo(44). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

[439 65] This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Imports have tripled in a few years. The Government has also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (").

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (").

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) ("), both of

which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoossa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*). This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread[42].

The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day.

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (**) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition.

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it.

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the felaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere.

Chapter VI

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

571 The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural, because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd. In the fields, as tenant or owner, he works with his wife and children; as a hired labourer, he works in a gang, swinging the *fass* or sowing seed in a concerted rhythm.

Limited as the fellah's horizon may be within the village, he works in the open air and in public more often than in the privacy of his house. The women go in groups to draw water, the children play in swarms, daily life is collective and communal. But to understand the village community, it is necessary first of all to look at the village.

361 137 Seen from outside, as it stands up in the middle of the plain or against the pale background of the desert cliffs, it is a huddled earthy mass, compact but shapeless, and crowned with bundles of brushwood. A whitewashed building, more important than the rest — perhaps a great pigeon-cote or the house of a notable — stands out from the confusion. Palms or acacias, sycamores or *lebbekhs* rise above the mass and relieve its drabness. In the bright light of Egypt these grouped or scattered trees around or in amongst the houses give a fine effect, and Brunhes has devoted a whole page to the picture in his *Géographie Humaine*. It is not for us to imitate him. We must pierce behind this magic veil, which is all that most observers can see, and probe the reality.

361 133 As the villages date from before the period of flood-control, few of them are actually on the Nile banks. Most stand back, at distances from a hundred yards to half a mile away. Others straggle along the edge of the Upper Egyptian desert, or stand huddled on a *kôm or tell*, that is to say the ruins of an ancient village or an artificial mound or dyke. In districts where the Nile flood is no longer to

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fellaheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the '*ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest. Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F 782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

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778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([illegible]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [768] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

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343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(21)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fallaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(22).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[539] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Copts MR10

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (**) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *summara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (**) c F 196 527

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Neesim ([illegible]), the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the children. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts([illegible]). The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

[143]

443 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a
437 piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

The market is usually held once a week and lasts from dawn to midday. The sellers, men and women, make their way to it at daybreak in long files, choose a spot to lay out their wares, and squat down behind them to wait for customers. Buyers soon appear from all the surrounding villages, and then all is a noisy, confused mêlée of men, cattle and goods.

Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured
435 goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

 [No (54). - Analyst]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Provisions also have to be bought, according to need, 432
opportunity and means. Here are a few prices, the first 435
column representing pre-war prices, the second those of 1943.

Meat	Pre-war		1943	
Beef, per oke..	P.T.	8	P.T.	20
Mutton, „ „	„	12	„	30
Kerosene for lamps or stove				
18-litre tin	P.T.	10-11	P.T.	20
1 litre	7 mills.		12 mills.	
Cotton-seed oil for cooking, per oke	P.T.	6-	P.T.	10
Tea, per oke	„	25	„	80
Sugar, per oke	„	3½	„	6
Coffee, per rotl	„	5	„	11
Cigarettes, per box of 20	„	2 or 3	„	4

Farm produce is bought by the local *bourgeois* or by agents, who send it elsewhere. Prices in the village market run as follows :—

	Pre-war		1943	
Chickens, per pair	P.T.	8–15	P.T.	40
Eggs, per dozen	„	1½– 3	„	5
Clarified butter (*samn*), per oke	„	12–16	„	36
Rice, per oke	„	2– 3	„	3½
Lentils, per oke	„	2– 3	„	5

Cereals and cotton are bought up by middlemen, or 435
by agents of the big firms in Cairo and Alexandria. The 443
prices vary a good deal. A *cantar* of cotton may sell at 300-550 piastres, according to the quality of the staple, the rate of exchange, or the impatience of the fellah. The small merchant buys a *rotl* of cotton from the gleaners for 7 milliemes, and sells a *cantar* at 252 piastres. An *ardeb* of corn (about 150 kilograms) will sell for 110-140 piastres, the price varying as before with the quality and quantity. For other goods the variation is less. The prices are lower or higher according to the distance of the market from the Nile, the season of the year and the fluctuations of supply and demand. For some classes of goods the price has hardly changed for thirty years. It still sometimes happens in the villages that more than one fourth of the business is done by barter, but the use of money is becoming more and more the rule.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

464 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country
571 roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the
[505 ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent.
[292] When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with
494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *kalazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have
[497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This
181 with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his out-
619 look in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [66]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *sagia*, *gamoosa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shády in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *ndzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellahen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[-21] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live ([a]).

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VII

THE FELLAH AT HOME

On his return from the East in 1932, Christian de Caters 342
spoke as follows about the houses of the fellaheen (*Echo de* 511
Paris, 16.6.32): "I have seen the poorest villages of a 735
Mancha in Spain, the hovels of the Cape Verde islanders, 171
and the reed huts of the Lundas, a savage tribe in the depths of Angola, but nowhere have I seen greater distress than in Egypt."

On the other hand, Lozach, in *Le Delta du Nil* (Cairo, 1935), finds that the fellah's home is "not far behind the stone or mud huts with a thatched roof which are still common in many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is in any case far superior to the miserable hovels in which most of the peasants of Tunisia or Algeria live".

Which statement is one to believe? It all depends on the point of view and the standard of reference. Such comparisons are in all probability misleading, especially when the cases compared are not parallel. A personal impression or opinion is not so useful as an actual description of the fellah's home, and of his life in it. This will show us how far the house is suited not merely to the fellah but also to the land he works on.

We have seen the public parts of the village. Let us 342
look now at the private dwellings of the fellaheen, without concerning ourselves with the big house belonging to the landowner or the residence of the *'omda*.

There are certain exceptions to be noticed first: —

1. Stone houses, which are found on the edges of the desert in Upper Egypt. The nearness of the cliffs makes it possible for the fellah to transport the stones for building in his basket. Some of these houses have a vaulted or domed roof.

2. Red-brick houses, without pointing, which are quite common in Lower Egypt. These presuppose a certain standard of living.

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

181 The dwelling of the fellah, like his work, derives its character from the soil, the manner of his life, and the social environment. The fellah is housed by the same earth that feeds him. He is a man of the soil in the true sense of the word. Here it is true that matter determines form.

333 The staple building-material is a mixture of clayey soil,
331 straw (from barley, beans, or flax), cow-dung, and Nile water.
342 This may be smeared over both sides of a rough framework of maize stalks, palm leaves, or reeds, to make the mud walls of the poorest type of house. It may be poured into wooden moulds to make crude bricks (*tûb akhdar*), which are dried in the sun and then used for building. The mortar used to join them is made of the same simple mixture, and so is the plaster which sometimes covers and protects the walls.

A wall so constructed, to be strong enough, must be from twelve to eighteen inches thick. A fellah with money to spare will build on a foundation of kiln-baked bricks (*tûb ahmar*) or of limestone rubble. This prevents the damp

that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 333 331

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 342 342 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, [137] sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [518] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanîsh, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

56 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
31 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

53 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zarîba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [379 354 415] [296 515]

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
193 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [731]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (").

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawlusi*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amir*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
581 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
[2] into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *felláha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
694 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684

Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [60]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

874 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

874 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[831] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

donkey to the fields and the *gamoosa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole village belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at *siga*, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The 1923 Constitution decreed that education should be compulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun to take effect. Schools are being established all over the countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages, schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places that within living memory had never seen a teacher are provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child population will be receiving instruction ([illegible]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers and wounded them. The peasants care little for education. They only want their children to help them to increase their earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 714
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him and teaches them the Koran.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
777 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[442] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[734] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

social and religious traditions, and in fear and natural respect rather than in any deep affection. 593

Yet the love of the son for his mother, even when he is grown up and married, is the most noticeable attachment in the fellah family. If he has been lacking in respect for her, the whole village is shocked. 'Paradise lies under your mother's feet.' She is mistress of his household, till her dying day. She is even named after her son, as *Umm 'Aly*, the Mother of 'Aly. 593 577

This relationship is the most solid bond in the family, the more so as ancestry counts for little. The peasant family has no forefathers, no family name, no individuality and no independence. In this it is very different from the Chinese family, to which ancestor-worship and the honour of the family name are very important. 593

Here the family group shades off into a wider community more or less closely interrelated by blood and marriage, the family in the social sense. Under the authority of its head this enlarged family attends funerals and weddings, carries on feuds, and is ready to avenge the honour of any one of its members. This solidarity is only of the present, for after three generations it is no longer recognisable. So, just as the house is not a complete unit by itself, neither is the family which lives in it. As there is no real 'home', because there is no home life, so there is no real 'family', because there is no family life. 593 602

The family is a group for working the soil, into which children are born as additional helpers. Its union with the soil is made doubly sure by a tangle of traditions regulating life in the home. 593

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water
271 that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as
823 not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river
823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
552 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

553 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
246 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs of the dead. 245

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them. [535 777]

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years. 777 842

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity. 785 757 278

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter. 183 171 178

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

771 Out of reverence for the past, which for the ignorant
182 fellah is shrouded in mystery, a system of rites has been
183 evolved, which he considers inviolable. This, while maintaining and comforting the individual, at the same time stifles his liberty and initiative and dulls his spirit until he is no longer able to distinguish between the essential and the superfluous.

But this structure, however vast it may be, does not constitute the whole of the fellah's psychology. It is one of the pressures he has to bear. Like the pressure of the soil and of living men, it warps him considerably, but it is no more able than they are to destroy his soul.

Chapter IX

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FELLAH

The peasant masses live on their own resources, without any contribution to speak of from outside. This is their strength and their weakness. A peasant is born, whereas a worker is made. The constant influence of the fellah's environment cannot fail to mould not only his body, but his soul as well. 181 183

We now know what the fertile Valley of the Nile, on the one hand, and the pressure of the social pyramid, on the other, consists in. The demands of both enslave the fellah; his life is all dependence—dependence on the soil, on material things, on the living and on the dead. The fellah must always obey, like a child under age ; such is the framework within which the outlines of his temperament are drawn. However difficult and however liable to misleading generalisations any study of collective psychology may be, we can nevertheless trace with sufficient accuracy the essential features of the mind and character of the fellaheen. The common factors of country, race, religion, social status, and manner of life, all of which we have considered in the foregoing chapters, entitle us to write in the singular of the fellah's soul.

It would be easy but unjust to judge him on a single point, as his masters do. "The fellah is lazy", they say. "All bodily labour is an effort to him. So he would rather live without bettering his condition than tire himself".

"The fellah is hardly ever grateful. However good his masters may be to him, he never shows them the least sympathy. He swears devotion to them when they are there and is active and hardworking ; but as soon as their backs are turned he becomes slack again and loses all initiative. "The fellaheen are a cowardly, cringing lot". "They are stupid, evil people. They take every opportunity of cheating you."

181 Other landowners or *nazers* take a better view. They
183 say: "Under their noisy exterior, our fellaheen are quiet, gentle people. They are satisfied with their lot, but rarely grateful. They have no interests apart from the soil." "The fellah is always happy and grateful. He is a hard and trusty worker."

114 Some of these opinions, which are taken at random from
181 both Upper and Lower Egypt, seem flatly contradictory. They
183 are not enough to make up a portrait, in spite of the good intentions of those who gave them; they all arise from a misunderstanding of the fellah and are in both senses of the word *partial* truths. The living reality is more complex. It would be an error of simplification to say 'Man is born good and it is society that makes him bad', or to look at only one side, the good or the evil, according to one's sympathy or lack of sympathy with the subject, or to one's own characteristic personal philosophy and outlook. To create a true picture, all these aspects must be taken into account. As in the old stereoscope, the image cannot appear in depth until both views are seen together, when there is a real combination of elements.

181 One important point must have become clear from what
has already been said: that the fellah's intelligence is rather
183 collective than personal, and more static than dynamic. His wisdom and experience have crystallised into pithy sayings and proverbs, which are ready coin for all the different circumstances of his life and absolve him from individual thinking.

The fellah preserves and repeats, but does not originate anything. Any improvements or inventions introduced into agriculture or housing have been imposed on him from outside. Through constant acceptance and submission his intelligence has become atrophied and passive. It is always kept in leading-strings and never stimulated to innovation. That would mean running risks and disturbing a torpor which protects him from unnecessary suffering. What a man knows is better than what he does not know.

This lack of personality and initiative furnishes in its turn an explanation for the want of sensibility or of any living art among the fellaheen. They are uncultivated in this direction less because they are illiterate than because they neither think nor strive. In their fellah costume, in

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy.

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow.

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the climate might explain this. But what can explain the apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race?

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries.

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellahen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (*)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband, which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

The 'omda understands this mentality perfectly. "Go to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his creditor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrizi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 573 754

181 This fear and mistrust, justified by long ages of extor-
183 tion and betrayal, make the fellah selfish and unable to see anything except as it touches himself. When he saves, it is in the greatest secrecy. If he has done good business, he will take great care not to speak about it ; so closely does misfortune dog prosperity. When matters of profit, land or women — the usual causes of division — are no longer in question, then the social instinct becomes paramount. We have seen how gregarious the fellaheen are in their work, their rejoicings and their sorrows. This sociability, when there is imminent danger to face, turns into solidarity. More usually it results in good humour and childlike display.

The more the fellah has saved up in the secret hiding-place in his home, the more likely he is to be carried away by the crowd at a holiday feast and squander it, for show as much as for enjoyment, like a child who cannot resist the temptation of a shop-window.

He is light-hearted, because neither past nor future worries him. He enjoys to the full the present moment : *Carpe diem.* When interrupted by an order, he replies "Tomorrow" (*bukra*), driving what he has to do out of the range of his consciousness, holding as long as he can to the present. Even when he has to obey at once he replies "*Hadir*" (presently) or "*Tayyib*" (very well) without any intention of hurrying himself. Everything in its own time. As he hopes for no improvement, why should he exert himself ? His torpor is his refuge, his *kaif*, that is to say his 'how', the way things suit him.

Kaif is a word of profound significance, expressing a kind of wakeful passivity which means doing nothing, saying nothing, thinking nothing. It is a form of perfect patience, taught him by the soil. To keep his mind half awake, to wait without apparent activity, or to drown activity in a private fantasy, in a humming which lulls his work and all his movement, in a mental languor which softens the shocks of human contact, that is *kaif*, the fundamental attitude of the fellah, a semi-consciousness which abates suffering.

He will come several hours early to catch a train, but may equally well arrive several hours late for an appointment. Punctuality, precision and haste are beyond his ken. Why should he set limits to the present or hustle it away ?

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoosa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoosa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 582

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrizi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. In the words of El-Koläly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (**)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Koläly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant home life, a good table, light company — these are things beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. They are material, but not materialistic. They believe wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawga*, (**) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

"*In sha Allah*".

"In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawga*. Good day".

'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not corrupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

Chapter X

THE FELLAH AND PROGRESS

In the great square in front of Cairo station stands a massive group of statuary hewn from Aswan granite. It represents the Sphinx rising on its forefoot, with a woman standing beside it, her hand on the nape of its neck, and her veil raised. This is *The Reawakening of Egypt*, by an Egyptian sculptor, Mukhtar. E 532

During the last half century Egypt has made more progress than any other Near Eastern or Islamic country. Politically she has become independent first of Turkey and then of England, and established herself as a sovereign State. This evolution has been made possible by the birth and growth in a whole class of the idea of nationality and a consciousness of the destiny of the Egyptian nation. Since 1923 the Kingdom of Egypt has had Ambassadors and Consuls abroad, a purely Egyptian Government, a parliamentary life and an opposition, universal suffrage and political parties with electoral programmes, ministries and a more and more specialised civil service — in short the whole paraphernalia of a modern state. E 175

Nevertheless this political life affects only a tenth of the total population. The fellaheen, who constitute the remaining nine-tenths of passive and unorganised citizens, take no more part in it now than formerly, when Turks or English ruled the country. F 181 184

They are either ignorant of the existence of all these new ideas we have just mentioned, or they have no understanding of them. They are Wafdists if you like — that is to say, members of the Nationalist Party — in the sense that the *'Omda* or the political agents have written their names in the party lists, but they are neither active members nor even supporters in the way Russian peasants would be, for example. No-one has taught them their rights and privileges. Demo- F 184 665

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 429 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([10]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([11]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria. The Government's primary and secondary schools count their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-Fellah*, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal? Are they following the élite of the cities? The answer is: either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelming majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise it. (") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who developed everything in Egypt except education; with the fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no eagerness to learn; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (73).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (75). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The flash was made illegal, and [651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah 681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows 731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has 661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to [453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed after the last war.

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of providing loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot. 453 426

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour. 657 426 474

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have 474

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (¹⁰). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kalâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafftr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the 271
inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new 312
waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tig, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn.

The creation of model villages has been more tempting 361
to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago 185
established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as 654
examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest.

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

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654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out (¹¹). 654 341 361

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor ? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit (¹²). 653 654 657

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals ? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be 623 744

744 to provide public conveniences, in the effort to combat the diseases which lessen the fellah's output ? The Ministry of Public Health, founded in 193[illegible] has given this question priority in its programme, but it has not a large budget, and most of its income goes to pay the salaries of its officials. It has, however, some genuine achievements to its credit. Sixty-seven dispensaries, permanent or travelling, are fighting bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. There are as many hospitals, with about four thousand beds in all, for serious illnesses. In 1936 there were 111 eye-clinics, which had treated 1,133,599 patients. Infant welfare is organised in some forty centres. Doctors, midwives, and visiting nurses, instead of waiting for the peasant woman to come and ask for help, go round from house to house to give treatment and advice. At least half a million visits have been made. By 1937 there were about five thousand certified midwives, who had taken a six months' course in a maternity hospital, and eight thousand of the second class, who had from three to six weeks' training.

744 To these splendid efforts must be added the even more
744 devoted labours of private institutions : the dispensaries and home visits of the Franciscan Sisters of Egypt and the many other Catholic sisterhoods, the Protestant foundations, such as the C.M.S. and the American Mission, and the more recent and methodical 'social centres' established in a dozen villages in the Delta.

It is a vast field, and these efforts up to the present have affected only thousands out of millions. Even those fortunate few often lose the benefit of their medical treatment through their ignorance, their unhygienic habits, and their poverty. These are the obstacles to progress.

183 A model village has no power to make the fellah a healthy
744 man, immune from sickness. The work of the authorities in the provinces is hardly more succesful. So long as the fellah keeps his present ways of thought and the ignorance that hinders him from knowing what is good for him and what is not, he will remain, in spite of all the improvements
[271 that are offered him, exactly as he is today. He will refuse
356] filtered water and drink the impure water his fathers drank. Give him a light, airy, healthy dwelling, and he will pervert it to his own manner of life. He will still be unable to
183 profit from the laws and institutions provided to help him.

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is 183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- 185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe 183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, 185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").
As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the 166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside 162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary 166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other 184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

F 184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened—a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E F 162 166 In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E 186 166 A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves that they hope to return. They find work most often as building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess*; they are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 [illegible] day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and a[illegible] in danger of unemployment.

E 166 464 511 557 After a few years' experience some come back to their native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers, fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an undoubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave. 178 511 735

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements. [171]

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit. 735 185

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" (").

In this low standard of living we must also include moral poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 511 735

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735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.
656 The greater number of official measures, for example,
746 are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkuz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five 747
young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (").872
"Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village.

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's [757]
and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist.
On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash.

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but [524]
it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules."

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, 747
and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah, but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (**). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 748 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

provided these show real cordiality and interest and have come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 183 185

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism. 748

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the *'ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work.

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and spiritual help : material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes : spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism .... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity." 121

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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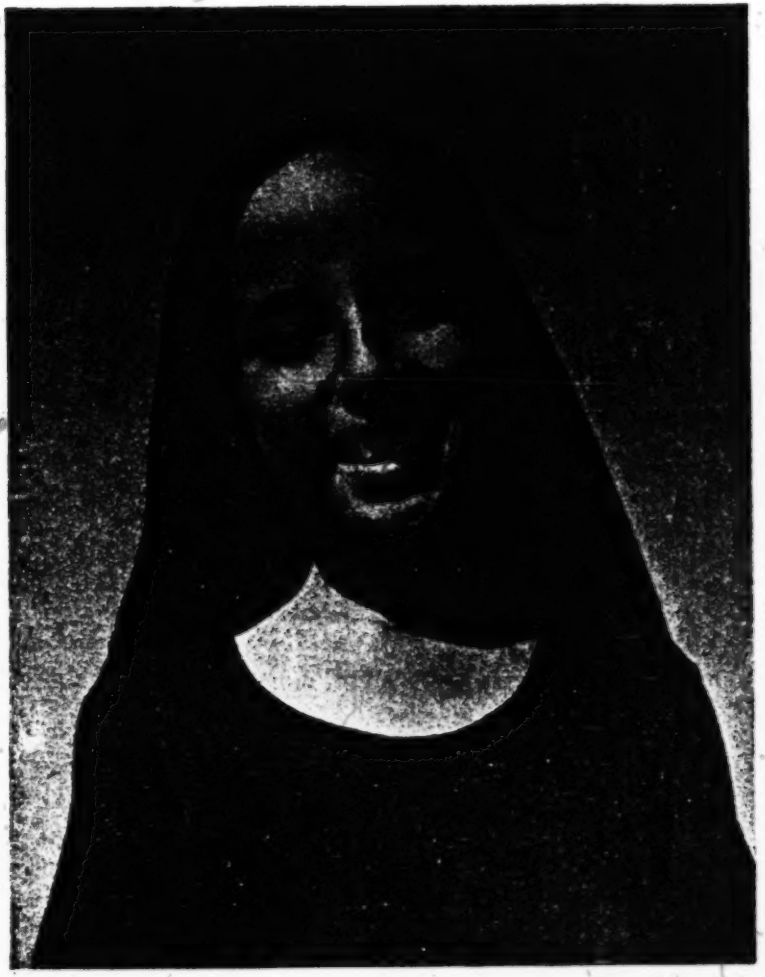

When they are happy

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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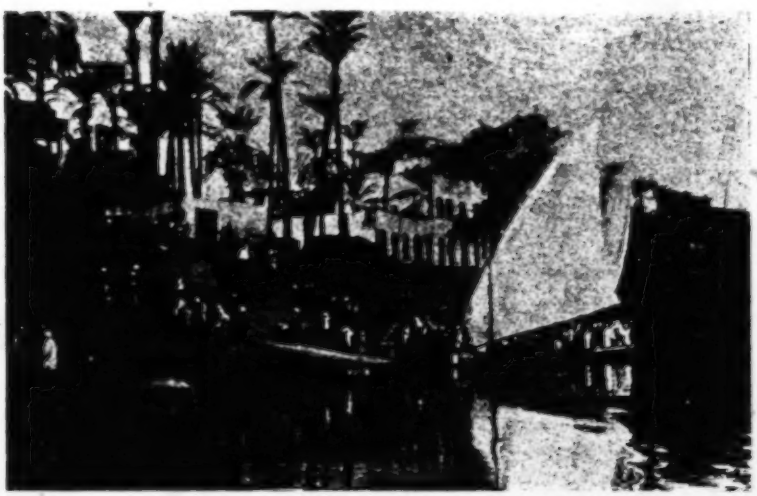
A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



501
361
342
504

A village and ferry on the Nile

291

With them

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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311
474
291
133

Digging ditches

248
133

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (*), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

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764 their sympathy to the dead man's family. The space set apart for the women is filled with wailing, but the men await the visitors in solemn silence. Everyone stands up at a new arrival, and greets him with a good wish.

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574 "The remainder to your life", they say, meaning "Whatever is cut off from his life, may God add it to yours, and give you a long life." The answer is "Life is God's".
764 Everyone sits down without more ado. Then, as if he had been searching the depths of his soul for the right words, the newcomer breaks the silence. He quotes sayings, proverbs, or passages from the Holy Books, consoling sentences about the inevitability of death, resignation to the will of God, the holy life of the deceased, the rewards promised to the just, and the courage which men should show in bereavement. One saying calls forth another and one passage is echoed by another of the same kind. Tongues are loosened. The orators show their skill. It is curious to see how much sympathy is shown on the occasion of a death. To comfort the bereaved, folk think nothing of a three hours' walk or the loss of a day's work.

Friends sit up all night with the family, giving the comfort of their presence and their ready help. Death is the great leveller, and provides a centre of attraction. Religious differences disappear and social classes come closer together. Moslems and Christians meet one another in commemoration of the dead ; rich and poor are united around a tomb.

E. Fellert, S.J. (*Minia*)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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APPENDIX B

DIRGE FOR A YOUNG MAN

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1. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend, a friend
Who has passed his life in tears and lamentation.
Men and women, he who is absent has a friend whom he grieves,
Whom he wounds to the heart on a day most bitter.

2. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend who weeps,
Whose heart is wounded on a day of gloom.
Oh my delight, you who are gone were like green grass
Or a young pigeon whose feathers are not yet grown.

3. They told me he was ill. I went in to see him.
He lies unconscious, and around him there is wailing.
Very ill he is, and now the illness deepens,
And even the doctor can do no more for him.

4. Please God they will be sold in the market !
Come and buy them, you who are in need !
Please God they will be sold under the hammer !
Come and buy them, you who have no children !

5. "If I am long away, you must break my pen."
Yes, and your ink-well, my darling.
"If I am long away, break pen and pencil."
Yes, and your ink-well too, my dear.

6. At the news of their death, my dress gets tangled,
And the mistress of the harem loses her wits.
At the news of their death, my clothes are in disorder,
And the mistress of the harem out of her senses.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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7. The way to the church shall be strewn with roses ;
Please God they will come to me on the eve of Sunday !
The way to the church shall be strewn with jasmine ;
Please God they will come to me at the feast of the Khamseen !

8. "You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state and I in another.
"You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state, and I all alone in another."

9. You were well ; what has happened then ?
Did it come on in the evening, or when was it ?
When they told me he was ill, I went in to see him.
The man who was so alive is lying senseless.

10. What did you do in the hour when your soul departed ?
"I drank gall in great draughts of bitterness."
What did you do then in the hour of your soul's departure ?
You drank gall in great draughts of bitterness.

Collected in 1941 *at Matay-Bardanooha*
by E. Tewfik.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [597]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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NOTES

113 The notes are those of the Second French Edition of 1942 (Horus, Cairo), except where marked *T*. These are annotations by the translator.

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1. HISTOIRE DE LA NATION EGYPTIENNE, 7 vols, Paris 1931-6. published under the auspices of King Fuad I, and edited by G. Hanotaux.

PRÉCIS DE L'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, various authors, 4 vols, Cairo 1932-5.

L'EGYPTE ANCIENNE, MODERNE, CONTEMPORAINE, P. Henaut, S.J., Cairo, 1935.

L'EGYPTE, APERÇU HISTORIQUE ET GÉOGRAPHIQUE, Cairo 1926.

1(a) *T*.—The standard works in English are :
Cromer (Earl of) : MODERN EGYPT, 2 vols, London 1908.
Lloyd (Lord Lloyd of Dolobran) ; EGYPT SINCE CROMER, London 1934.

[101] 2. FELLAH, masc. sing., originally one who tills or ploughs the soil ; masc. plural FELLAHEEN ; fem. sing. FELLAHA.

3. DÉSCRIPTION DE L'EGYPTE, Paris, 1821-9.
These volumes comprise a valuable collection of detailed observations and researches, made in Egypt during the Napoleonic Expedition.

4. Jean Brunhes : LA GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1925.

P. Vidal de la Blache : PRINCIPES DE GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

Lucien Febvre : LE TERRE ET L'EVOLUTION HUMAINE : Paris, 1922.

5. *T.*—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrizi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 133 [134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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113 162 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant." THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan.

[423]

[453 425] 15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

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and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651]

27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249
136]

28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465]

29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249]

31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735]

33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302]

38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

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39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS, Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

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59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand. E F 113

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages. F [586]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14. F [162 872]

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.) E F [796 527]

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F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171] 64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443] 186 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

but in fact it has been influenced considerably both by the colloquial and by modern European languages. Conservatives attempt to maintain, and reformers to narrow, the wide gap which still remains. 191

73. MODERN EGYPT, by the Earl of Cromer : Macmillan, London, 1908. The second of the two volumes deals with the social condition of Egypt. 113

74. THE BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, by Ibrahim Rashad, Director of the Department of Co-operation in the Ministry of Agriculture : Government Press, Cairo, 1935 (in Arabic). The second of the two volumes deals with Egyptian practice.

75. See an excellent study in Arabic by Dr Sayyid Karim in the review EL-IMARA (*Architecture*), No. 11 for 1941, pp. 51-64 : VILLAGE REFORM : THE MODEL OR THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE ?

76. 'Successive Governments have spent L.E.14,000,000 to pay off debts on property, that is to say to save the big landowners, who do not number above 13,000. This means that these privileged persons have received an average of L.E. 1,000 each, which has been paid out by the Treasury on the pretext of maintaining agricultural prosperity. [746 735]

'The Government has this year allotted L.E. 17,000 to the establishment of social centres. This means that each poor fellah is to have half a piastre. If we add to this the expense of supplying drinking-water and free medical treatment, the sum set aside for the poor by the Government is no more than a few piastres a head.' (AL-INZAR, Minia, 3.3.1941)

77. Draft Budget for 1941-2, in the Annals of the Chamber of Deputies for April 1941.

See also: Ibnet ish-Shaty': THE QUESTION OF THE FELLAH : THE REFORM OF VILLAGE EDUCATION, DEFECTS IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, pp. 112-131.

Taha Bey Hussein : THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN EGYPT (1938), Vol. II, pp. 94-125 on ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Jacques Tagher : THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT (1942), pp. 59-63.

(The last three are all in Arabic.)

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113 78. 'Aly Shamsy Pasha, Speech in the Chamber, December 1939.

79. A VILLAGE SUMMER SCHOOL, article in THE SOCIAL WORKERS' BULLETIN, May 1938.

80. 'Abdul-Halim Abu-Seif Radi, 7.4.1941.

81. Apostolic Letter to the Mexican Bishops, 28.3.1937; section on the peasantry.

785 796 527 82. The fasting month of Ramadan is succeeded by the month of Shawwal, the first three days of which are a great public holiday, the Lesser Bairam. About two months later comes the other great holiday, the four days of the Great Bairam.

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The Arabic words are spelt so as to give English readers as close an idea as possible of the correct pronunciation. *Q* is put for the Arabic *qaf*, almost inaudible in Cairo and the Delta, but usually sounded in Upper Egypt like a hard *g*.

areiq —A water-pot with a spout, holding about $^1/_8$ gallon.
'asha —evening meal.
ardeb —198 litres or $4^1/_2$ cantars.
'arif —Coptic cantor or lay clerk, often a blind man.
'arussa —bride or engaged girl ; or a doll.
Al-Azhar —the ancient Islamic University of Cairo, founded A.D. 988.
balad —town, country, village.
ballas —large round two-eared jar, in which women carry water on their heads.
bandar —provincial capital.
barari —dried-up marshes.
bur —uncultivated or desert lands.
cantar —about 100 lbs. (of cotton)
daira —office of an estate.
dekka —bench.
'ezba —village, privately owned, for the workers of an estate.
fass —hoe.
feddan —a little more than one acre.
fitama —weaning.
gallabiya —long outer robe of men.
gamoossa —female water-buffalo.
garuf —winnowing-fork of wood.
ghada —midday meal.
ghaffir —watchman.
hagg —one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.
halla —metal cooking-plate.
ilzamiya —public elementary school.
kassabiya —leveller.
kirat —one twenty-fourth of a feddan.

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kohl —antimony, a black eye-salve, at once decorative and hygienic.
kuz —drinking-mug: often a tin with a handle.
kuttab —village school of old Koranic type.
lifa —palm-tree fibre.
libda —felt skullcap.
mâmur —chief constable.
mâzun —religious officer, who records marriages, divorces, etc.
mahr —dowry to the bride.
markaz —police district or its headquarters.
mastaba —a raised seat built against a wall.
mawwal —erotic song.
milaya —large black veil for women.
mihrat —plough.
moawen —assistant to the chief constable of a *markaz*.
mudir —governor of a province.
mudiriya —province, rather like an English county.
mulid —birthday feast of a Moslem saint.
nabbut —long stick or cudgel.
nazir —superintendent of an estate.
norag —threshing machine.
'omda —head-man of a village or small town.
oke —about 2 lbs. 12 oz.
okiya —one twelfth of a *rotl* = $1\frac{1}{3}$ oz.
rayess —foreman, overseer.
rotl —one hundredth of a *cantar* = about 1 lb.
saqia —water-raising machine with wheels and a chain of buckets.
sarraf —tax-collector.
sebakh —natural manure
semad —chemical manure.
shaduf —water-raising machine with a long pole, worked by hand.
sheikh —old man or notable.
shoona —a large enclosed area for storing cotton or grain.
tabliya —very low table for meals.
taqiya —calico skull-cap.
tisht —large basin or shallow tub.
wakf —a peculiar form of entail or trust.
zahhafa —leveller.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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EGYPTIAN MONEY

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L.E. 1 (Egyptian Pound, called "guinea") = Ll. Os. 6d.
P.T. 1 = 1/100 of L.E. , a piastre, or a big piastre (Arabic *qirsh* or *qirsh sagh*) = 2½d.
P.T. ½ = 5 milliemes ; a small piastre, or "ta'rifa".
1 millieme = about a farthing.

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FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

BEING THE RELEVANT PARTS OF THE
ṬIBB AL-RUKKA OR *OLD WIVES' MEDICINE*
OF 'ABD AL-RAḤMĀN ISMĀ'ĪL

BY
JOHN WALKER, M.A.
ASSISTANT KEEPER, BRITISH MUSEUM

τοὺς δὲ βεβήλους καὶ γραώδεις μύθους παραιτοῦ
"Refuse profane and old wives' fables"
(1 Timothy iv. 7)

[Page 3]
[Title Page]

LONDON
LUZAC & CO.
46 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C. 1
1934

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الآتية ياملح ياملح ياجوهر يافصيح امك الحرة وابوك الملح ٥٥٥
بخروا اللحاف بمنع عنكو « عنكم » وجع لكتاف . بخروا
الكتكوت لايأكل ويموت . بخروا الطراحة تجيب لكو « لكم »
الراحه . بخروا المغرفه من عين امو مصطفه . ثم يقول شيجي
ملح من عند النبي الفصيح . شيجي كده وكده من عند
السيده . بخوري مرقي من عند سيدي البرقي . بخوري
دا المقبولي من عند سى المدبولي . بخوري انا جاوي من عند
سي العشماوي . سنداس ياسنداس يامرسى يابو العباس

ثم يعود الي الاصل فيقول اما عينين الجاريه زي
السيوف البارية . اما عين الفران احمي من النيران . اما عينين
السقه جالو من الله شقه . اما عيون البنت احمي من الخشت .
اما عيون الولد احمي من الزرد . اما عين النجار امضي من
المسمار . اما عين المرة احد مشرشرة « من » اما عيون الجاره
الساحرة المكارة تمشي بكل نكارة وتقول انتي ياجارتي
كنتي من الله حامدة انتي من الله شاكرة . ماتخرح اللعينه .
من دار دي المسكينة . حتي تسيبها حزينة . تخرب القصوري
« ياء الاشباع » وتعمر القبور . بخرت دي المشنه من عين

Specimen page (II, 18) of the Arabic Text of *Ṭibb al-Rukka*

Frontispiece]

Frontispiece
[Facing page 3]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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[Page 4]

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

SOME months before his death, in May, 1928, my master and friend the Rev. T. H. Weir, D.D., Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Glasgow, suggested to me that I might translate the following little Arabic treatise on some superstitious practices in modern Egypt. He very graciously allowed me to have access to certain of his own rough translation notes, but unfortunately I was unable to finish my rendering in time to profit by his valuable criticism and advice. I can here but inadequately express my deep sense of gratitude for his inspiring teaching, his great erudition, and, more than all, his memorable friendship. 114

The treatise of which this is an English rendering, appeared in Arabic in two small volumes of 158 pages in all, printed at Cairo in 1892–4 (A.H. 1310–12). The author was an Egyptian doctor, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī Ismā'īl, and his book is entitled *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, i.e., The Medicine of the Old Women. For an etymological note on the meaning and origin of the word *rukka* reference may be made to page 18 of the text. A third volume was promised but, so far as can be discovered, was never issued.[1] I understand that the late Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, contemplated translating the present volumes. Certainly he refers to the work in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine*, 1921, page 65. The Arabic text is also referred to by Professor D. B. Macdonald in his article on magic (*siḥr*) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, in which he states that it "contains much curious information on popular superstitions, especially medical; the author is a graduate of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī medical school and writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner."[2]

In spite of the author's obvious lack of sympathy with the popular medical "prescriptions," he had ample opportunity of gaining first hand knowledge of the customs and practices of 113 114

[1] The author did publish in the following year, with the approval of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, a work called *Al-Taḳwīmāt al-Ṣiḥḥīya*, but it is merely a straightforward, elementary treatise on hygiene.

[2] Prof. Macdonald vocalizes the title in his transliteration as *Ṭibb al-Rikka* (see below, p. 18).

113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those
[103] of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully
[101] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

1860. There is also *Al-Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (trans. by 113
Jayakar, and published by Luzac & Co., London, 1906–8), an entertaining zoological lexicon which has embedded in it many curious instances of Moslem folk-medicine.

To confine our attention to Egypt, however, without doubt 114
a great deal could be done by a cultured Egyptian student of 121
folk-customs to collect these age-old, but fast dying, practices. A stranger can seldom hope to obtain, unless after many years' residence among, and constant intercourse with, the natives, that insight into their mentality which is necessary for such a study. Hence the work, here presented in an English garb, should be of no little value to students of folklore, and indeed to all interested in human thought and waywardness, since education, in general, and medical science, in particular, have both made rapid progress of recent years in Egypt, and the Egyptian Government's proposal to establish hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country will do much to eradicate the "cures" of the Old Wives and the village charlatans. So the day is coming, we hope, when the dangerous "remedies" of the modern Nile Dwellers will be no longer practised, but will be relegated to the archives of human error. As such the instances recorded in the present book should have increasing historical value.

The Arabic original is now out of print—in fact the British Museum possesses only Part I—but by this rendering into English of the relevant parts it is hoped that the material will be made more accessible than it otherwise would be. The translation has not been without difficulties. Besides being unvocalized throughout, as well as faulty in style, the Arabic text is none too well printed, and there are several textual errors. Still another difficulty that presents itself to a non-medical reader, is the exact rendering into English of the many medical terms used. Unfortunately the great Dictionary of Medical Terms compiled by Dr. Sharaf,[1] which has proved [113]
very helpful, is only English-Arabic and not *vice versa*. This has necessitated a great deal of search and rectification. It is to be hoped that the medical equivalents are not too glaringly

[1] *An English-Arabic Dictionary of Medicine, Biology and Allied Sciences*, by Dr. Mohammed Sharaf, Cairo, Government Press, 1926 (1st edition).

114 121 inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

104 The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ج by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

114 128 The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

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(ca. 1890)

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Luzac & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

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PART ONE

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

To those who wish to investigate the secret of the folk-medicine of the modern Egyptians, we offer new data which we have obtained after diligent search and careful scrutiny. For it is a secret which those who have it treasure, and take care not to divulge, as if it were the philosopher's stone or the *arcanum* of alchemy. Yet, if it were among the actualities which are corroborated by scientific proof and intellectual evidence, impostors would not hide it behind veils of falsehood, nor gild it for the minds of simple people, who trust in it and consider it a heavenly thing and a divine science. I am referring to a low trade and mean occupation, which charlatans engage in as a means of obtaining spoil and as a source of plunder. Indeed we ought rather to designate them as public robbers because they go round the countryside sometimes in company, sometimes alone, so that no village is free from their mischief, nor does any land escape from their guile. Some of them disguise themselves in the garb of pious derwishes and of learned *ulemas*. Others make the speaking in a foreign language the snare by which they appropriate much of the property of those whose strength has been reduced by diseases, and who are ignorant even to-day of the methods of physicians and of the water-holes of healing. 121 755

It is strange that the only thing one can understand from the jargon of these swindlers is that apparently they have devoted their lives to the extraction of the treasures of spiritual sciences. So that, when they say anything, you see simple folk welcoming them and magnifying their value. And they have no excuse for so doing, except that the roots of these follies have for long been planted in their thoughts. They have been scared by the tales of the "old women" whose 755

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755 sole desire morning, noon, and night is to forge such like absurdities, regarding which "*Allah has sent down no authority.*"[1]

Would that the young men of the present generation would confine themselves in their medical experiments to what neither benefits nor harms them. Instead of doing so, however, they repeat the experiment again and again, asserting that what did not succeed in the past was due to their own shortcomings, because they did not completely follow out the whole of the instructions in the "prescription," and as ill-luck would have it, the "prescriber," *alias* the quack, has done his utmost to improvise ingredients to which the hand of man cannot attain, for the simple reason that they do not exist.

Nevertheless, these "prescriptions" of the quacks are sometimes highly esteemed when it happens that the sick man is cured of his disease, or his health improves gradually, after his using the "prescription," or the supposed drugs; whereas the truth is that the illness passed through the normal stages [p. 6] until a cure resulted, a common rule in diseases. I may say that many of them succeed, not from any therapeutic peculiarities in them, but from the play of imagination and nervous volitional influence, which according to biologists in most recent times, has a very dangerous action upon the constitution.

Professor B—— mentions a famous incident. Sentence was passed upon a criminal guilty of murder. The Criminal Court handed him over for experiment to a learned physiologist who wished to prove clearly the influence of imagination upon vitality. He therefore tied up the arm of the criminal after blindfolding him, and addressed him as follows: "Your soul will depart without your feeling anything, because you are going to be bled to death." He then lanced the man's arm slightly, and poured over it a stream of lukewarm water, which the criminal took to be blood flowing over his body, and within half an hour his appearance changed and he died as if from loss of blood.

Another savant records that two youths were rivals for the love of a fascinating girl, till jealousy forced them to take steps so that one of them might free himself from the com-

[1] [Koran, xii. 40; liii 23. Tr.]

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petition of the other by taking a draught from a cup of poison. So they brought their witnesses (as is the common custom with Europeans in such cases) into a darkened room in which they had previously deposited ten cups, one of them containing quick poison, and the remainder other liquids. The two set to work, but as soon as they had raised the cups to their lips they immediately fell dead before they could taste anything of the poison, for, in fact, both cups contained ordinary drinks.

[p. 7.] I happened to be one day in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, Cairo, in the operating theatre, when there appeared a youth suffering from a complaint which did not call for an operation of more than ten minutes. He was afraid, however, of the pain of an operation and would submit to it only on the condition of his being chloroformed. So the chloroform was brought, and the operator made the patient imagine that he had taken a great quantity of it, and that he would be rendered completely insensible. Before long he fell into a deep sleep and completely lost consciousness like one who has inhaled a great amount of chloroform; while all the time the physician had not made him smell one drop of it.

Now that we have demonstrated by actual instances the influence of imagination, there only remains for us to set down here, in order, all the falsehoods and absurdities in which the "old women" trade; for anyone who buys from them comes away fleeced. And since these stupidities as a whole are named the *Science of the Rukka*, or of the "old wives," there can be no harm here in mentioning the reasons for their being called by this word *Rukka*, the meaning of which we have discovered after a long investigation and uninterrupted inquiry. It is as follows:

Rukka in the technical terminology of the "old wives" is a piece of wood upon which flax is shaken in order to get rid of any foreign substance that might spoil it. This was the practice in ancient times as well as to-day. In special circumstances, however, the word is applied to the women who are at home, whilst the men are busy in the fields. For they usually gather together of an evening to perform whatever duties their husbands or masters may have imposed on them. Then the talk goes round amongst them at those times and

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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755 they boast of the success of a "prescription," which one of them has tried [p. 8] upon one of her daughters, or on one of the members of her family. Hence the association of these "prescriptions" with the *rukka*, for according to the dictionary *rikka* as well as *rikāka* means "an old woman of weak intellect."[1] In my opinion one of these two expressions is the reason why these "prescriptions" are named the *Science of the Rukka*. For whoever considers these absurdities, both old and new, will find that they have their source in the imagination of the "old women" and in their foolish beliefs. And since the original design in the composition of this treatise was to investigate these beliefs, we now proceed to retail them to the readers of our book by way of admonition and warning.

[1] [The author definitely spells the word as *rikka* (رِكّة), which is the form of vocalization adopted in the *Supplementary Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum*, 1926, p. 99. (See above also, p. 5 *f.n.*) The form *rukka*, however, is more in agreement with the vernacular pronunciation. Besides the above explanation of the origin of the word, Vollers has proposed another etymology, viz., from the Italian *Rocca*. (See his article in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol LI, p. 322.) Reference may also be made to Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, chap. xi. Tr.]

I

THE TAḲRĪFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. 164
It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it 757
forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats 755
a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him before her with his lower extremities extended, while she remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way. Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great force, the result of which is often death. She does all this without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an "operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient. (We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault. because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it) Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture [278] of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there 756
is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not 755
order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

756 choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines
755 depends proportionately upon the employment of violence or gentleness in that "operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that "old woman," saying, "The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the "prescription" of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the "old woman" who "prescribed" this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

777 THE common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers).
764 Their "prescriptions" would make a bereaved widow laugh!
755 For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there be found in it "the bone of the unbeliever"—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the "old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

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[p. 12.] But if it be impossible to find such a bone, then the "old woman," entrusted with the cure of the invalid, orders one of the patient's relatives to go alone in the second part of the eve of Friday into the cemetery and bring back a brick from a grave in which no one has been buried for a long time, and place it under the head of the fevered patient. It will improve his health. 777 756 755

The "old women" also employ for a relapse a wonderful "prescription," which I have seen with my own eyes in the case of a patient whom I was treating for a violent intermittent fever. When I was by his side asking him how he felt, and thinking about his cure, I heard a commotion in the courtyard of the house. On investigating the matter, I saw a woman in one of the corners of the room where the patient was, busy muttering spells over some dry cakes of cattle-dung. Outside I saw another "old woman" of an evil countenance, with a white girdle over her black clothes, bearing on her head a sieve with a great crowd of boys behind her pelting her with stones, and jeering at her. She took no notice of them nor scolded them (because the "prescription" demands that), but continued advancing thus towards the door of the sick-chamber. Then when she reached it she began calling out, "Is there anyone here in a relapse (*mankūs*)?" The other woman who was inside the room answered, *mā 'indanā mankūs walā wag' fī rūs*. "There is no one in a relapse here, nor even with a headache," and she hit her in the face with one of the cakes, over which she had ceased reciting the spell. But the other kept on asking and the other answering her, after the same fashion, until the twelve cakes were all used up. Then the "old woman" outside carried them in the sieve upon her head and went off, I know not where. [p. 13.] I was seized with the greatest wonder and astonishment, and on asking for an explanation, was informed that this "prescription" was the cure for a relapse. As for those cakes, the "old woman" would throw them into a disused well that same night. My comment was that in that case there was no necessity for salts of quinine, and I withdrew from their midst leaving them to their folly. 755

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III

THE MUSHĀHARA

008 THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

008 751 842 755 The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

008 751 THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the above-mentioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images [003] of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. 778 Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those 751 afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places 757 treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with [164] leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man [759] famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts 757 from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over 278 the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water [278] becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case [769] of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṣ-ṣarṣā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

THIS word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

comes to her, and he has taken it into his head that he is 757
suffering from piles, he offers her whatever money fate has bestowed on him, and she requites him with an "operation," of which the following is a description. She takes between the tips of her fingers a special preparation which she puts in the *anus* of the patient. Next she moistens her fingers with oil and puts them a second time into the *rectum* (*mustaḳīm*) until when she has succeeded in mixing the oil with the first special prepartion, she draws out her hand, which has become smeared with coagulated blood, resulting from the morbid local inflammation. As a result the wretched patient thinks that these bloody lumps are the piles, and so it is noised abroad in the mouths of the populace of that village and those adjoining it, that such a woman tears out piles by the roots, pulling them out in her hand like the liver of fowls.

Sometimes the patient finds relief for a day or two after this "operation" because, for one thing, the oil softens the local inflammation referred to above, and, for another thing, the woman by inserting her hand into the *anus* sets up an expansion of the sphincter (*'āṣira*). So the patient for these two reasons finds a slight relief from suffering. But this method is obviously fraught with injury, especially if the reader knows that the source of the dysentery is in the germs which the "doctress" carries and with which she infects the patient.

I once heard a government official say that being afflicted 759
with piles, he was recommended to a man called the Shaikh Aḥmad al-Khaṭṭābī in [p. 19] the Khurunfish district of Cairo who was famous for the treatment of this disease. The latter treated him for three weeks, at the end of which the trouble and the pain ceased. I bethought myself of coming face to face with this man, in order to make his acquaintance and derive benefit from him. In fact, I went to him three times on three successive days and entreated him both for myself and for many of his companions, that he might enlighten me about the secret of the medicine, and take me as one of his pupils. To this he consented, but only after he had put me on 757
my oath that I would not divulge his secret to any doctor or layman; besides (he added) if I did reveal it to anyone, it would lose all its virtue and be useless. Thereupon he brought out a

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957 paper containing some powder and said, " I make plasters of this antidote (*tiriāḳ*), and place them upon the piles; then they are cured by the permission of Allah." I took a little of it between the tips of my fingers, and on examination found it to be orpiment (*rahg*) one of the compounds of deadly caustic arsenic (*zarnīkh*) which the common people call " ratsbane " (*samm al-fār*).[1]

" *We took it, reckoning it pure gold, but the blacksmith's bellows revealed the vileness of the iron.*"

Anyone who has the least smattering of the science of medicine knows that this element is caustic. Barely have a few days passed after using it before a man endures considerable pain, and when he recognises the source of his mistake and the consequences of his foolish belief, he is filled with remorse.

VII

SUNSTROKE (BAṬḤAT—AL-SHAMS)

953 THIS is cerebral congestion from the effect of the solar rays, and the manner of its treatment according to the method of
955 the " old wives " is, that the key of a door which faces towards the east, and is opened counter-clockwise is procured. (There must be found [p. 21] in every village at least one house fulfilling these two conditions). The " old woman " takes this key, procures woollen cords (or braces) and wraps them round the head of the patient, using the key which is in her other hand to accomplish this. In this way she keeps on bracing these cords until she can do no more. All this while the patient behaves like a bereaved woman, lamenting, and calling out, and crying for mercy, but there is none to pity. Next the " old woman " begins massaging the patient's head. I have seen her with my own eyes after all these operations, biting the skin of the patient's forehead between the eyebrows, in a fierce manner even to the effusion of blood. For she believes that the bones of the patient's head have become

[1] [Arsenic trisulphide. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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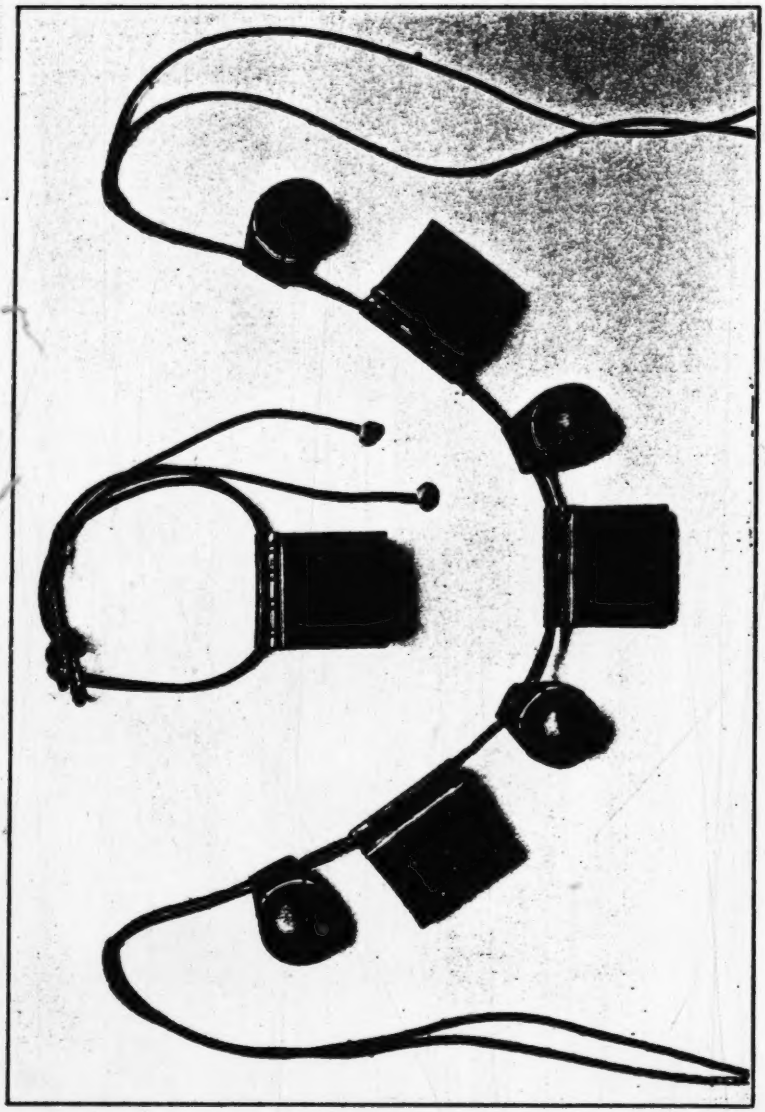

MOSLEM AMULETS
Two stamped leather amulets of the kind used in Egypt to-day as prophylactics.
(By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

Facing p. 27.

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 976
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian ('*aḫīḳ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce*; and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

754 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no
753 one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*
776 did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sīrāf [?] (جون سيراف),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalīfa*) of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or " bewitched " according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle ?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

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[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756
market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, " The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

" THE LODGER " (*NAZĪL*)

" Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a " lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick ! "

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the " old wife " enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his " assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2] 755 776 787 878

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery. 756

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.] [777]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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XI

FRATERNIZING WITH THE JINN

791 SOME of these false sheikhs and scandalous tricksters claim that they possess charms or spells which they procure from the *Jinn*, whom they have under their jurisdiction. One such individual who gained the confidence of fools in the past, was a person whose domicile was in the city of Damanhūr.[1] Caravans used to go to him from all the villages. One of the people
788 of my own village of Zemzem,[2] who had beheld this fellow and
791 had actually seen [p. 30] his tricks, told me that he was once invited to this village. (His story was as follows): When he drew near we saw his servant behind him carrying a bag. So we asked him what it contained. He said it held clothes for his servant and himself which they needed to wrap themselves up in when they summoned the Jinn. His host was a man named Sarūr in whose house there had assembled a mixed crowd of men and women. The women he established in the upper part of the house on the roof. When a great part of the night had passed, the Shaikh extinguished the lamp, which was the only one in the dwelling that had been lighted. Then he motioned to those present to go away from the corner of the room in which he was sitting, because he pretended that the approach of the Jinn was at hand. Meanwhile he was making the audience imagine that he was busy changing his clothes, and that his servant was doing likewise. But the truth is that they were both busy extracting trumpets from their bag, along with similar instruments of deception and delusion, which they consider assist the imagination. When they had finished this, they then began beating a copper bell with great force so that it seemed to those present that the Jinn (lit. the "Helpers") were falling upon them from the ceiling, and issuing from the bowels of the earth, and coming forth from all directions accompanied by this prodigious clamour and tumult. The

[1] [A well-known town in the Delta, capital of the Buḥaira Province. Tr.]
[2] [In the Delingāt district near Damanhūr. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

two men followed all this up with a blast on the trumpet to such a pitch of violence that the veins of their necks were almost torn asunder. This "operation" was to assist in confirming the false opinions in the minds of the onlookers. After this the Shaikh turned to the lord of the house, after he made him stand up, and said to him [p. 31] "Your guests and lodgers have come to-night, what have you provided for their hospitality?" Then the fool of a man apologized to him, saying, "Please be so good as to excuse me. I did not think that they would eat as we do." "Never mind," said the Shaikh, "there is no harm done." and he shouted as follows, "Oh, Dharbākh" (which is the name of a jinnī, one of his "helpers," as he asserted), "Come to me." At once a voice was heard answering him, "To hear is to obey! Oh, my lord I am here; command me to do what you wish." He then said to him, "Bring us here delicious, fine-smelling fruits." Thereupon the "helper" went off, and returned after a second, accompanying his steps with a mighty tumult and a monstrous din, which made all hearts palpitate with impatience and alarm. Then he placed many pomegranates before the false Shaikh, who said to him, "Whence do you bring these?", to which he replied, "From the garden of Munāshela" (which is a village about a mile distant from Zemzem). At this the audience was astonished at the agility of this painstaking messenger and his celerity in fulfilling desires. Then they all received what the Shaikh gave them of that fruitage, except one who lay upon his back roaring with laughter, because he was aware of the secret of what was in the bag. As soon as the Shaikh saw him do so, he said, "So you laugh at Al-Murāḳib, the Protector of the mountains of Upper Egypt, or at Al-Shammākh, who is the master of the complete deed and the fulfilled word, whose armies extend to the country of Yemen and to Hind and Sind. Oh, ye people, escape quickly lest the evil of his uproar may touch you and yours!"

Immediately the men began rushing and pressing together in the search for safety, dreading what he might impose upon the house in the matter of misfortunes or disasters because of that mocking laughter.

[p. 32.] But when the women (up above) perceived this,

they thought that the Jinn had killed one of the party, so they began shouting and weeping and bemoaning in a most heart-rending manner. It so happened that the fugitives wandered from the path, and their imaginings drove them into a sheep-fold, in which were the sheep belonging to one of the fellāḥīn. As soon as they entered this enclosure the sheep were scared because of them; but they thought that they were devils, and this groundless imagination was fixed in the minds of some of them to such an extent that they fell upon the ground motionless as if dead. Others began scurrying over the ground; and while the rest were scaling the walls, one of them turned behind him and saw two rams butting each other. He thought they were killing one of his companions who had fainted in the middle of the pen. So he cast himself from the top of the wall to get away from that revolting sight, and fell into a worse and more revolting state, namely, by smashing his legs and his hands.

As for the fraternizing Shaikh, he had taken the opportunity of the emptiness of the house, and he and his servant had stolen the ornaments and garments therein, before they both went outside, fuming and raging at the shamelessness of that person, the jeerer, who was deserving of the anger and displeasure of the Jinn.

Strange to relate when the mistress of the house on the following days perceived the loss of her jewels, she praised Allah, and thanked Him, that the Jinn had not taken anything else. "What would I and my children have done," she said, "if the Jinn had abducted me?" And such absurdities are still remembered and handed down by people who believe in their authenticity.

XII

[p. 33.] SAND DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-RAML)

MOST of those engaged in this are Sudanese. One of them will seat himself in the middle of a road near the wall of a house,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit.

Facing p. 35

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

with a little yellow sand in front of him. To him resort the illiterate, lazy rabble that he may foretell to them their dark future and their unfortunate fate. He draws lines on the sand with his finger, after the patient has crossed his palm with silver (for they imagine that the veils of hidden tidings are not raised except after the payment of white money). Then he says to him, " You are a poor man. There is a tall, brown fellow " (hereupon he adds a description of him), " who speaks evil of you behind your back and seeks to accomplish your ruin " ; or, " There is a girl who sadly weeps for you night and day " ; or, " You are restless in your thoughts, and there is a knotty problem ahead of you which will, if Allah allows it, be solved." And in like manner he manufactures all kinds and varieties of stories and tales, and if it is in agreement with what circulates in his mind, then the enquirer will rise and kiss the hand of the fortune-teller in gratitude for his goodness since he has scattered from before his eyes the clouds of doubt, which hindered him from a knowledge of future events.

XIII

SHELL DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-WADA')

In this branch of pernicious beliefs the practitioners are Sudanese women. One of them seats herself, like her countryman, in the middle [p. 34] of the road with a collection in front of her of sea-shells, and fragments of minerals, green and red and black, each with a special name indicative of something that is passionately desired. Their clients are mostly women who had no education in their youth, and now that they have grown up have become submissive to the power of the imagination. One of them comes to the Sudanese hag and divulges to her her complaint of being jilted by her sweetheart, and his abandonment of her and his trifling with her ; or, she describes to her the anger of her husband towards her and his driving her from his house ; or, that she is barren, etc. Then when

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[787]

the hag has drawn from her her desire, she takes hold of her shells with her hands and throws them on the ground, and answers her after this fashion: "The shells tell you that a handsome, upright young man is in love with you but his forsaking you is excusable because a young woman, named so and so, has written lovingly to him; but Allah will drive away all cares and troubles from your heart since your lover will come back after so many years, and so many months, and so many days"; or, perhaps she says to the next: "Your husband dislikes you because he loves your neighbour. This shell said so, look at it." Or else she says to the other one: "You will have a child but you must call him Shaikh so and so. When that happens you must give me a douceur," and so forth.

As for shell-divination and the drawing of lines upon sand, and the writing of amulets, and the fraternizing with the Jinn, we have described them in detail since they are among the maladies of society [p. 35] which lead many times to the destruction of souls. There is no cure more successful than putting the law on the track of such quacks who cure nothing but imaginary ills. It is incumbent upon Government officials, to repair the damage done, and parents ought to warn their children against having recourse to such charlatans.

XIV

BIBLIOMANCY (FATḤ AL-KITĀB)[1]

[791] THE practitioners of this craft are Moors[2] and Sudanese.

[1] [Literally the *Opening of the Book*. Sometimes the Koran is the "Book" employed. A photographic illustration of such Koranic divination may be found in Miss Blackman's work (p. 196). But in this section the "Book" may be any copy of a Koran Commentary (such as *Baiḍāwī*, or Zamakhsharī, or a collection of Ḥadīth (Bukhārī), or more likely one of the multitudinous Magic Books on sale everywhere. Also "playing cards" are given this name in popular speech, and are, naturally, used in this way by fortune-tellers. Tr.]

[2] [There is a current proverb, *Al-Maghrabī kaddāb yiftaḥ al-kitāb*, the Moor is a liar who opens the Book. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigāb*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 798
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl 753
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother 769
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throw- 756
ing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a Shaikh from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳih. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 789
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 754
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
878 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūsharwān. Tr.]

842 Some women who are barren carry a silique of wood filled
801 powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in
878 fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

842 THIS is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die.
755 The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

842 They explain all this by saying that the husband has a
776 mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this " operation," which certain of the " old wives " undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only " cure " for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be " cured " of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted !) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARĪNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhilīya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

776 855 695 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say," God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXVI

THE TANFĪḤA

E F 164

THIS is one of the absurdities, the validity of which has overcome the minds of the simple in our happy country. The people of Upper Egypt call it the *Talwīḥa* (" *swinging* "), but amongst the inhabitants of the towns, such as Cairo and Alexandria, it is called (معمود) (sic) [Al-Mu'aumad (?)] and so also by the people of the provinces of Lower Egypt. With all its names it means the acute relaxation of the bowels, which attacks very young children. The " cure " is as follows: The " old wife " orders the child to be placed in a spacious woollen cloth which is wrapped round it several times till it is used up. Then two women take hold of the ends of this cloth, with the wretched child imprisoned in it, and turn it round following a perpendicular circular motion during more than a quarter of an hour. This, in truth, is the easiest and quickest way to kill children, because the child, who has the misfortune to be born to the person whose thoughts are controlled by the power of [p. 53] delusion and ignorance, is seized with concussion of the brain due to the wicked circular motion, and dies from lack of breath. In the cities mothers procure drugs from the " old wives "; the one which I have seen most commonly used being white lead (ceruse) (or carbonate of lead), mixed with the white of an egg. Now it is well-known that ceruse contains poisonous materials. So when it is placed on the child's belly it screams with pain. Then the mother continues in the thought that his weeping is only from the original pain which was the cause of her treating it with such a harmful remedy.

F 755

E 757 278

XXVII

" THE STRANGER " (GHARĪBA)

F 164 000

THE common people use this term generally for a number of eye ailments, especially sha'ra or trichiasis.[1] Many women

[1] [Introversion of the eyelid.]

Many women

756 in the villages are famed for the "cure" of them. One of them is known as Sitt Umm Ḥusain. She resides in the village of Ibrāhīm Aghā in the district of Shubrakhīt. Her "specific" 757 is to take a piece of the hollow stalk of the bamboo (*ghāb Fārisī*), and split it lengthways down the middle, and place in it the skin of the patient's eyelid. In view of its flexibility it squeezes upon the eyelid and hinders its nourishment, so that it becomes violently inflamed, perhaps extending to the neighbouring parts, and destroying the eye. The result[1] of this ill-omened treatment is that the part squeezed becomes affected [169] with gangrene, the eyelid becomes separated from the eyeball, and the latter becomes exposed to all external influences, great, and small, there being now nothing to protect it from injury, not to mention that the patient through this "operation," becomes ugly and hideous, the sight of him frightening children and offending grown up people.

Many others besides Sitt Umm Ḥuṣain there are who go round the villages rooting out eyelids as if they thought Allah created them unintentionally.

XXVIII

HEALING OF THOSE BORN BLIND (CATARACTOUS)

757 A NATIVE of Mandūra in the Gharbīya Province claims that 278 he has done some of the things for which Jesus (on whom be peace !) was noted, and has made the blind to see (or, rather, to describe him by what results from his works, he gives those who have eyes, eyes to see). What he does is, he anoints the ophthalmic patient with *koḥl*, which he makes himself, and in ten days he is "cured."

I was informed by one of the leading people of the Buḥaira Province about some antimony [*koḥl*] which he bought from

[1] [Dr. A. F. MacCallan, writing in the *Egyptian Gazette* (April 7th, 1927) on the development of Ophthalmology in early Arabic Literature mentions this popular Fellaḥīn "cure," and adds: "*The trichiasisentropion is occasionally cured* (by this method), *but always at the expense of a shortened upper lid, and the frequent production of lagophthalmos.*" Tr.]

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *kohl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarītī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]
(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *shūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *kohl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awshar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]
[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]
[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *habbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XII*, 207. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

F 181

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

F 181 759 554

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

E [291] E 756 755 E F 52

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

E F 756 755

the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, " Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī Shaukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began " treating " his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

E F [164] [278]

Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

E F 756 278

After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

[1] [See note above p. 43.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

EF 756 878

drugs, salts and acids and alkalis with labels, on which were written their names in Latin, in very indistinct letters on account of their age. The bystander could not help suspecting that this was merely the leavings of some pharmacist, which this man had bought up after the death of the owner.

On turning my head to the right I saw written on one of these bottles " sulphuric acid," so I asked his lordship about the contents of the bottle, in order to try him, that it might put an end to my suspicions regarding him. He answered straightway, " This is oil of mandragora, or apples of the Jinn." Then he produced a vessel gilded on the outside and said, " This is the *Kohl* (stibium) of the Forty. It puts and end to obscuration of the surface of the eye, and I produced it myself by boiling it in oil of rose mixed with the grease of serpents forty times." He generously presented each of us with some to experiment with, but when we had left his dwelling we threw what was in our hands on the ground, except one of us who was determined to try it. He put a little of it in his eye, and the next day was afflicted with ophthalmia of the cornea which took him fifteen days' treatment to get over its evil effects.

Mark the difference, O you who are intelligent and skilful, between the dwelling of this ignoramus aping the physician and [p. 61] the clinic of one of our keen native doctors. You will find the difference distinctly visible. While the former rejoices in success and prosperity, the latter suffers ill-luck and neglect.

XXX

HEADACHE (ṢUDĀ')[1]

F 164 753

THIS is applied to many illnesses, but is only rarely an original illness. It arises from decay in the bone of the occiput,

[1] [Professor E. G. Browne, in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine* mentions (p. 4) that this noun of pain appears in the Latin version of the Ḳānūn of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) as Soda (*Sermo universalis de Soda*), a term which must have bewildered those without the Arabic original. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

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757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [786] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [789] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

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XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains 164
chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such 753
as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the "treatment" 755
of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria [756]
in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is "cured."

The explanation given of these "cures" is that sciatica is a 753
disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming
drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that [158]
imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are 854
his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, 755
and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, 753
before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. 164
Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heavi- 753
ness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The 757
"operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. [164] Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the 563
Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and 759

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

F 563 759

counsels. And they are not to be deceived by the fact that certain men of science in Europe have recently arisen in support of the methods of "curing" possessed by the Ghagar and by the "old wives." It will not be long before they reverse their opinion.

XXXV

THE FARGĀN (TRIBE) AND HYDROPHOBIA (KALAB)

L 831 164

It is well-known that the Bedouin and Arabs who dwell in the deserts and wildernesses, are harmed by their employing dogs as protectors and friends, and making them serve as guardians and watchers over their lives and possessions. Because of the wide-spread use of these animals amongst them, the chances of being bitten by them have increased. They "cure" such by means of cauterization with a heated iron, whether the person be afflicted with real hydrophobia or not, as is often the case.

L 752 759

It is firmly rooted in popular belief to-day that there is no escape from the evil consequences of a bite except "treatment" by this method at the hand of the *Fargān*, a small group of the Aulād 'Alī tribe,[1] who call themselves Marabouts (*murābiṭīn*). You see those who are bitten by dogs going repeatedly unto them, and seeking them out from all parts of the country and the farthest horizons, to obtain healing and relief from the distress of the disease. As for the above-mentioned "method," it consists of heating a piece of iron in the fire until it reaches the stage of being red-hot. Then the *Fargān* take it and severely burn the wound with it. And one of the observations which the patient must follow is to remain in a darkened room for the space of fifty days, during which he must not approach his wife. Otherwise the benefit [p. 71] expected from the "treatment" ceases.

[1] [Desert Arabs. See P. Kahle: *Die Aulad-'Ali-Bedouinen der Libyschen Wüste*, in *Der Islam*, IV (1913), pp. 355–386. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9 Egypt MR1

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Study and research have shown that the cases in which the "treatment" of the *Fargān* proved successful were caused by dogs that were not rabid. It happened one day that a dog bit a man who was passing by. This man went to the encampment of the *Fargān* in search of healing. They "treated" him with cautery like the others. Not many days elapsed until there appeared in him symptoms of real hydrophobia, and night and day he was heard barking shrilly, behaving like a dog in all his actions, while his teeth were gnashing in terror. In this state he continued for a space, then he died.

Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the claim made by the *Fargān*, they have only to bring their proofs and, when their assertion is substantiated, we shall be satisfied with the glory that our common people are better than the élite of Western savants. But when we consider the matter we find that such high skill in the healing art is not achieved as a favour, but by habitual toil and industry. And the physician Pasteur, whose fame has filled the two hemispheres, did not gain his immense wealth and widespread reputation, except by devoting his life to the discovery of what he achieved in the treatment of this disease (namely, hydrophobia) after its cure was (thought) impossible. The French government built for him at their own expense a special hospital to which patients go from all quarters of the inhabited world. As for Egypt we do not forget that the Khedivial Government has sent, for the past six years, five of those afflicted with hydrophobia [p. 72] to Paris to be benefited by healing at the hand of that famous physician. So if the *Fargān* are to be trusted in what they assert, why then are they niggardly in publishing the truth, and averse to the praiseworthy place in History that would be theirs on their revealing it?

Long ago, Galen said that those bitten by dogs benefited by being given daily a drachm of burned powder of river crabs, and the illness would cease after forty days.

The doctors of India use for those afflicted with hydrophobia a draught of the Indian *Ḥuḍaḍ* or *Ḥaḍaḍ*, a drachm of it upon an empty stomach for forty days, then the hydrophobia will cease. But it is not of the slightest advantage except it be accompanied by, what the *Fargān* do in our country, "ironing"

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the Shaikh or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḥ*, plural of *gōḥa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753] cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352] that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [777] the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [561] for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *ṭarbūsh* crowned with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandara*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78.] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

"Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is clear that those who thus imitated the " old wives " of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay (caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have become famous for " curing " it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He has two " treatments " for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization ; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter " method " makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is " the poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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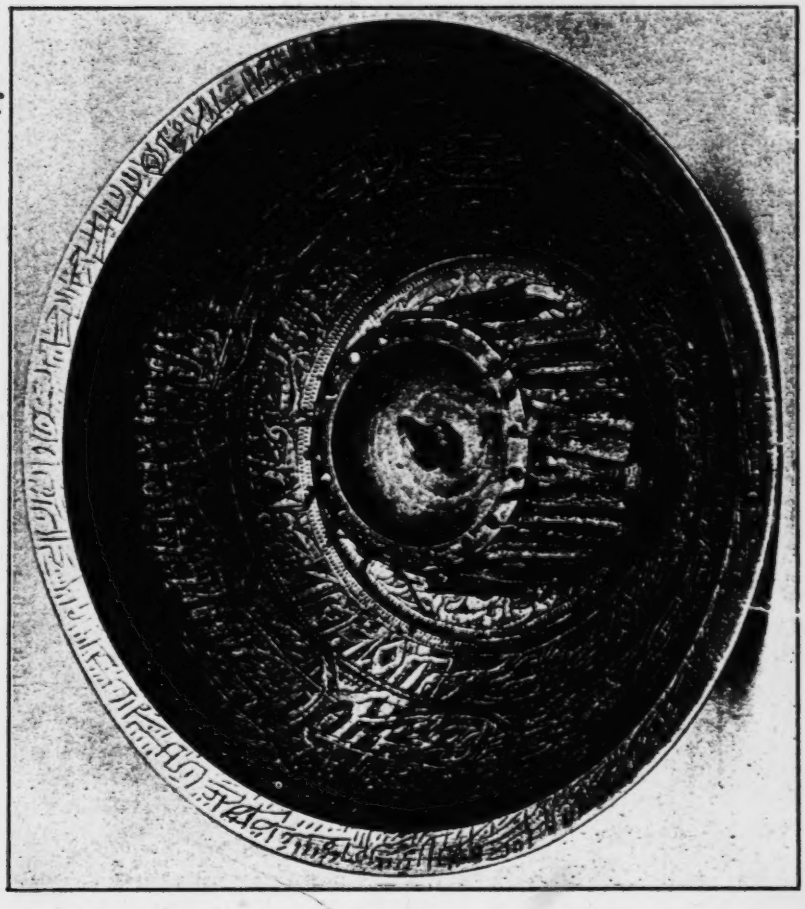

THE "FRAR" CUP (*Tāsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 69]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-husnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is Ghafūr (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the Koran, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

"AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they 'prescribed' incensing,
Which an "old wife" among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation?
And does their 'incensing' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton?"

Some of the "old wives" in the provinces were famed in past ages for their "cure" of venereal disease by "incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An "old wife" came to "incense" a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the "incensing" of the "doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkha*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

The manner of it is this: The "old wife" orders the windows of the sick room to be closed first of all. Next she orders him not to eat anything but thin bread and honey during the space of ten days. On the eleventh day a large fire is kindled in the sick room [p. 84] and the "old wife" places on it her incense (which consists of pieces of sulphate of natural mercury) that is, cinnabar [*zungafr*, or sulphuret of mercury]. There goes up a thick vapour which fills the emptiness of the room. Then the "old wife" leaves her patient and goes out quickly that his punishment may be endured in solitude, since he inhales the quick poison of the fumes of the quicksilver flying about. I was informed by a trustworthy person that one patient died after two hours of the "fumigating," though, before it, he was fairly well, his illness not being dangerous or fatal. This mistake is common in all the districts of Egypt. And no matter how the "old wife's" methods or herbs may vary, they do not produce the desired effect nor any part of it, unless indeed the object of destruction. It is suitable, in the most expeditious manner, for that.

XLI

'ISHBA

As some obtain a "cure" by incense, others, both men and women, dispense with medicine by means of *'ishba* (sarsaparilla), which is too well-known to be named here, even children know it by heart, for they think that in it is a divine secret opposed to syphilis. But they are wrong, seeing that is has no use at all to-day as far as we know. Some people reckon it itself and sassafras, and guaiacum [lit. "wood of the prophets"] to be of the herbs causing sweat, but in my opinion, tea is better than any of them.

It is quite certain that the bulk of the *fellāḥīn* in these days know the truth of what we have said, because of its inefficacy, and that they have turned aside from it. Nowadays they know

another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

"MIXING" (MADHAḲ)

Madhaḳ literally means "mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. And they "prescribe" for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this "method" is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (أم الرأس) "mother of the head"], and there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

[1] [This "mixing" or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-khartīt*) consists of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

164 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIKKA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the ass, and one of the "doctors" beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the "sagacious ones" enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of "quacks" in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

Some women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *fimūs*, for which I read *kimūs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTAḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (صبح حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (مطبوع النارنج).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

" When the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *ẖabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: ' Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance !)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

L

"CURERS OF THE POOR AND DIVINERS OF TREASURES"

"For illness of the body, sometimes healing is to be hoped for,
But the illness of poverty is indeed difficult.
What is the thought of the ignorant when they lose
Their wits? When the quack roams about,
And says, Divination (*jafr*) tells me of treasure.
So the person who gives money will find happiness.
The glory of incense is nothing but a means
By which the artful fashions the impossible."

An Arabic proverb tells us: "In corners are hidden things" (*fī zawāyā khābāyā*). I do not seek there, however, for hidden treasures as people assert. I only indicate that anyone who tests mankind in regard to their characteristics and customs and their several degrees of wealth and poverty will have revealed to him many unknown matters, and there will be solved for him many mysteries and obscurities. And of these no enigma is more difficult of solution amongst the common people than "the Extraction of Treasures." For they think that the magicians of the [p. 99] Ancient Egyptians and Romans used to bury their possessions in the ground under the guardianship of the Jinn "Helpers" who were forced to defend them by the power of names. So, whoever knows these names and enchantments is undoubtedly the most fortunate man of his day and generation. Thus have people inherited this error and made it their stock in trade. There is no district in the provinces without a company of these cheats who conceal this secret for the sake of obtaining power by it in the regions which they visit, until their glance chances upon a group of simple fools whom they treat at first as friends. After the (so-called) friendship has been manifested, the "Revealer of Treasures" suggests to certain of these ignoramuses that they should offer him some cash in order that he may buy incense with it for revealing such and such a treasure in such a village.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

He demonstrates that in proportion to the increase in the amount of this cash there will be an increase in the gold of the treasure. So the poor ignoramus goes off to his dwelling to fulfil his injunctions, or rather facilitate his road to riches. Sometimes he has not a dime in his house, so he borrows a sum from Zaid or 'Amr for the space of a week (to be paid back from the "treasure"). Perhaps he sells his wife's ornaments without her knowledge. Then the impostor pockets the cash and goes off like 'Anzī the gatherer.[1] Yet if these fools had any insight they would see the state of the "Revealer of Treasures," his narrowness of life, his degradation and contemptibleness. And if it were in his power to do what he claims, he would be rich without their petty cash.

But this error is not amongst Orientals only, but amongst Westerners as well.

One of them told me that the owner of a European café said to him: "A fellow countryman of mine entered my café one day. He appeared from his dress to be a Baron or a Count. My opinion was substantiated straightway, for, after he drank [p. 100] a cup of coffee, he gave me a pound and went off without waiting for the change. It seemed to me that he would return. But when he did return he did not take the change, nay, he gave me another pound on the second and third day, and so on until my spirit became madly enamoured of this Lord of Gold, and I began to make a friendly compact with him. After a time, when he was intimate with me, I asked him as a friend, 'Why do you supply me with these gifts, the like of which we do not hear of, even from European Dukes?' He answered me, 'Do not ask the reason, for the matter is wonderful.' Then I began imploring him, so he promised to explain that story to me. On the next day he said to me: 'My friend, every day I extract a frightful quantity of gold, because Allah inspired me with the method. By it one *dīnār* becomes two, so why should I be stingy with you a fellow countryman, seeing that you are poor?' So I asked him to take twenty *dīnārs* (which I had made in the past few days) so that he should return them as forty. He came back next day and handed me forty pounds, and told me that

[1] [A person in proverbial lore who went off and never returned. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

1791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

1776 1789 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the foot-prints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast day observed by the *sunnīs*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shī'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

[805] [1796] [1785]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

of the night and drowsiness was on the point of overcoming us, behold we heard the trample of hoofs near the house, and it suddenly occurred to us that it might be the mule. Our thought was not groundless for we actually encountered a black mule carrying a sack, and in the midst of the sack something projecting which we thought to be the severed head. So the master of the house led the mule to his home (after there was almost a conflict amongst us almost to the shedding of blood, each wanting to take the mule to his home in order to be "blessed" by it, or more likely in order that it might become accustomed to be present every year in his house. The result was that we came to an agreement, through fear of the arrival of some new shareholder who would diminish the shares). So when the mule graced the home of our host he hastened to offer an unstinted measure of wheat and barley as food for the noble animal. Meanwhile one of our friends was judging the sack from its outside appearance. He informed us that it was stuffed with gold dust and not cash. His proof of that was that he bit with his teeth on one of the corners of the sack and the gold dust yielded under his molars. Then the master of the house chid him and said: "Wilt thou scoff at the She-Mule of the Throne?" Then that fellow answered him by grasping him by the throat, saying: "Wilt thou not be quiet after we have allowed you to have a private view of her noble self, that you seek to fall betwen her and me!" [p. 102]. Both fell a-boxing until their voices rose and a company of the village night-watchmen assembled. Just then a black servant, a muleteer, appeared, and asked them to stop (saying): "Did you not see a mule with a sack on its back? It has strayed from the road and it is loaded with ashes (*kuṣrmill*)." Those present were astonished, and for a moment the earth almost shook under us. The people knew our ignorance. But as for the mule, it had finished eating what had been given to it, and the muleteer took it away, laughing at us.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin
Middle East-Arabic Period M3
Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

LII

THE ALCHEMY OF GOLD

EM
822

THIS is one of the famous methods of curing poverty (or, if you like, of getting rid of the wealth of many). The hopes of a number of simpletons who try in vain to change iron into pure gold are dependent on this. They spend their time wasting mercury, until they merit the distrust of all true scientists. Some of them assert that Jābir ibn Ḥaiyān[1] was the first to establish this method, but their assertion is false, and their imagining idle, since that excellent person never demonstrated that, nor occupied himself with it. Nay, he discovered a number of chemical substances[2] on which Westerners reared the bulk of their knowledge to-day. He used to liquify mercury and metals with acids in the hope of their becoming new substances beneficial to science and to the world. But the stagnant intellects of the ignoramuses who came after him, did not understand the meaning of his quest, so they said he occupied himself with the Alchemy of Gold.

822

And supposing he busied himself with the changing of metals into gold, Ibn Jābir is not to be blamed or found fault with, because science was young then, and the blame—the complete blame—is upon those who asserted such a thing after they deemed themselves the leaders of the Age of Civilization, and who were, time and again, declaring that they were the pillars of knowledge and science until temples were built for them and they were almost worshipped. By them I mean the men of the West [p. 103], for indeed Paracelsus,[3] in spite of his fame, lost a great part of his life in occupying himself with the transmutation of metals into gold.

Grant us these things, and tell us about him who repudiated in his philosophy the whole of science in its entirety and almost

[1] [An Arab alchemist who is more famous in Europe under the name of Geber. Tr.]

[2] [He is credited, rightly or wrongly, with the discovery of Aqua Regia, sulphuric acid and nitric acid. Tr.]

[3] [The Arabic text gives BRZLBUS. I conjecture Paracelsus. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Middle East-Arabic Period-M3 Egypt MR1

M 877 E 877

demolished the religion of his people, and affirmed that religions were false. He was busily engaged in the other parts of his life with the particularities of names, and magic and astrology and the alchemy of gold. I mean by him the famous Voltaire. So why do we ignore these and say: "We Easterners were, and do not cease to be, in a manifest error?" In general we find in Egypt many worthless persons, who have no work, addicted to the worship of some leaves which they deem to be treasures of great value (but their value is but madness, if they only knew it). You see them bringing numerous substances to produce the concoction, and keep on kindling fires under it until it all flies off in smoke. Then, when they do not find anything except a little dust inside the crucible, they think that they have made a mistake, so they begin the work again and again, and so on till their cash is lost, and their lives are like scattered dust. And while their money is coming to an end they are pouncing upon the ignorant with their imbecility, and they waste the remainder of their substance as the Treasure Diviners [see above] have done. This evil is found in cities more than in villages. I know many of the well-known families in Cairo, whose wealth was brought to an end through "the extraction of gold."

LIII

DECEIT UNDER THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION

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[p. 104.] We now come to the laxity and forgery that are blended with the medicine of to-day, and what makes it fanciful or seemingly so, just as we mentioned the description of the men and women of the Past. Therefore, we say that there is no doubt that the sciences have advanced to-day since yesterday. Let us leave aside the distant past to be judged by the future. We do not know in which of the two science advanced more. A great number of intelligent people hold the opinion that time was when the sciences were more advanced than to-day.

The truth is that most of the works of mankind to-day

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
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proclaim that those holding this opinion are right without a mistake. Those who consider the doctors of the present generation, whose opinions clash and whose views disagree and whose drugs differ, are bewildered and know not which of them is right and which of them is mistaken. The person who considers the book which is printed in all languages as a commentary on the Elixir of Judenau (?) (جودنلو) and sees that it cures all incurable illnesses in a short space, and who uses the "cure" for years and does not obtain the slightest advantage, becomes in his distress enraged against physic and physicians. Every invalid who turns the pages of this bulky book repeats what is written, viz., "By the use of six glasses of this Elixir the invalid will be cured of pulmonary consumption." Afterwards his glance falls upon an article as follows: "The Journal *France Moderne* reports: 'All the medical sciences acknowledge that this Elixir cures all heart diseases, meningitic inflammation, and diseases of the arteries and decay of the bones,' to which it adds a rider: 'It prolongs life when used in a suitable way.' (The patient) has recourse to this elixir which he does not cease to use [p. 105] while the malady increases in strength, and its course is swift, until he dies a natural death, and then he learns the truth that these statements are false.

We were astonished at the person who came to Egypt during the past year and began announcing in the public streets to the effect that the medicine of "*Sīkwā*" (سيكوا) was the only cure for deafness, blindness, rickets, consumption, piles, and all incurable illnesses. It is obvious to anyone watching that person seated in a carriage embellished with gold, adorned with mirrors, drawn by a pair of fleet horses and surrounded by a band of musicians, while he himself is proclaiming that the famous *Sīkwā* is leaving Egypt on the morrow, that Galen was risen from the grave, and that this was a suitable chance of gaining possession of his remedy.

Doubtless intelligent people were not deceived by the like of these profitless manifestations. But the strangest of them is what we see printed in the columns of our local journals under the name *Salwar* (or *Salūr*) (سلور), whose beneficial pills are well known as a "cure" for many illnesses.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

But the chief marvel of his shrewdness was when he heard about the belief of the Egyptians in empirics, and sent them pills to cure them, and began proposing to them things which, if they abstained from them, would alone be sufficient to restore their health. He prescribes bathing in cold water every morning and abstaining completely from drinking or smoking as well as the eating of food half cooked, although if every sick person considered these things he would not need the "cure" of "His Excellency the Servant of Humanity." Those who know science, or who study medicine, wonder exceedingly at the ignorance of teachers and authors who assert: "They (i.e. the doctors) are unable to cure many diseases. They submit to the judgment of their inability to overcome diseases when the *Elixir of* [p. 106] *Judenau* and the drink of *Sikwā* and the pills of *Salwar* cure all."

You also see European Pharmacies, especially, and drug-stores, filled with compounds prepared in Europe—"specialities"—for "curing" those sick of such and such an infirmity after so many days' use. If they were genuine then what would be the advantage to invalids in crying out for doctors to pursue medical research? All they would have to do would be to resort to these compounds and dispense with all else.

The patient with any chest trouble, for example, would simply use *Īrīz Pills* (حبوب ايريز) which, they say, cure all chest disorders.

The patient troubled with V.D., for example, would resort to the *Drink Jibīr* (جبير). It is said to stop all turns, in spite of their different character.

Now are these people really serving mankind by means of their remedies, or are these matters quite devoid of truth, or are they intended for another purpose?

In fact, they are only the errors of swindlers or the snares of those to whom we can commonly apply the name of lawful thieves, a clique who appear in the midst of the throng and the struggle for life and are reduced in spite of themselves to obtaining riches and wealth from any source, provided there is no law to restrain them and no one to prevent them. This is the rule of the new civilization and the modern manner of life.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin
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FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

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People come forward to contrive tricks to obscure the minds of the multitude, while wicked men lead them wherever they wish just like dumb driven cattle that man leads where he likes. Is there a law to protect mankind from treachery, deceit and cunning? Or is there a means of influencing people against the intentions of worldly men so as not to permit a tradition [p. 107] of tyranny and destruction?

I have not spoken without calling in a witness, for many Westerners (leaders of Civilization and servants of Humanity) lose their time in absurdities, the wickedness of which they are the first to admit to other people; but how harmful they are when they swear they are beneficial! Whoever is impelled by misfortune will find in one of the famous hotels (in any of the cities of the civilized world), people with appearances indicative of greatness and riches, and faces deceiving the onlookers that they are noble and virtuous. He will see this man of eminent appearance, whom tens of servants wait upon to hear his commands, and for whom splendid carriages are prepared for his delight, and appetising foods for his consumption. Afterwards he will know that he is a gambler or a thief, cunningly endeavouring to place himself among decent people in order to plunder their goods, which they have acquired by the sweat of their brow. Will he say after this that this is Civilization?

Whoever examines the secrets of some rich men and the reasons for their riches (in the world of success) and knows that it resulted from carrying off the property of the weak and the poor, either by bribery or theft, will he believe, after that, their professing to serve the Truth?

Or whoever sees a company of doctors—and many sometimes appear among them in such a guise, and boast [p. 108] of their appearance—who begin to demolish with their evils what the virtuous have erected, will he admit what they say: "Verily we have devoted ourselves to the preservation of mankind from the mischiefs of diseases"?

Nay, he who knows that tens of thousands are lying hid in their lairs like ravenous wolves, professing a discovery and claiming an invention, will not speak after that without sin and wrong. He will see a company of men on whose breasts

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin
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FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

Evil has pitched her tent and on whose hearts she has stretched her tent-ropes. Morning and evening these thieves are crafty in ways of carrying off *dirhams* and *dīnārs*. They do not care by what way they succeed. Besides I have read an English book entitled: *How to Become a Famous Doctor*. I used to think before perusing it that it would counsel with regard to responsibility and good conduct, but I saw the opposite of that when there came, in its second chapter [the following]: "The doctor who is endeavouring to acquire money must provide himself for that purpose with methods and set up snares, because money is in the grasp of its owners and it is not possible to extract it except by an extraordinary power, which is swindling and stealing with honour. For this he must know the celebrated meeting places in the city. These he must frequently pass through, hurrying on his way, clothed in his finest garb, which ought to give forth the smell of carbolic acid and iodoform, in order that those present may think he is coming from a surgical operation."

"And when he rides in a carriage, and is at a sick person's, let him pass in it through the best known parts of the town. And if by good luck he chances to know a place having two doors in different streets, let him pass before people through one of them and go out by the other. Then he is hidden from the eyes of beholders for some time after which he returns whence he came. People then imagine that he has visited a patient. He must also look attentively at the patient's dwelling, when he goes in to him, and see [p. 109] what different kinds of things are there. After he sees everything, small and great, and the patient commences to detail his malady, he [the doctor] says to him: 'Now I understand the trouble. Did you not eat such and such? Did you not drink such and such? Did you not indulge in such and such? (mentioning the things which he noticed on entering the patient's house). Then the patient naturally imagines that he is one of the most discerning of physicians, and pins his faith on him and refuses all the instructions of previous doctors. Do not despair, O ye skilful doctors! Many sick people firmly believe that you have knowledge of the Unknown, so follow, therefore, what is pointed out to you! When you meet, in a patient's, with a doctor who

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is acting like you, do not make him a butt for criticism and reproach, but agree with him in order that you may seek his help in increasing your profit. Do you not know that the thief who is not perplexed nor astonished is he who, when he encounters another thief, whom he does not know, in the house to be robbed, is cheerful and happy in appearance. Then each helps the other in the theft in order that they may not be led to the tribunal of retribution, when they quarrel.

" So I counsel you, O doctors ! who are striving after riches ! to make yourself appear before men always with the appearance of being busy with science or research (even if you hate that itself ; for all men like you, do not love science and education for themselves but for the sake of gathering money). Whoever sees you, while you are in your carriage, reading a book or a periodical, will think that there is no one equal to you in the world. And when you are invited to a banquet do not go except to the rich, and if they do not invite you take care to be at their banquets, for on them depend your advancement and your wealth. Try every means for this, even if it leads you to the necessity of forging an invitation card. Do not go near intoxicants at banquets in the sight of men, even if you desire it yourself and you are one of the greatest drunkards. And do not dally with women publicly, even if you are the greatest debauchee." [p. 110.]

In the eighth chapter of that book occurs (the following) : " If a sick person calls you in, and he has previously summoned another doctor and the latter has prescribed for him medicine which you see and recognize, then show your aversion from it and write another prescription for the same medicine (even if the medicine of the previous doctor be specially for the malady), and only add colour to it in order that it may change its original form.

" And if people in one town know you as an ignorant fellow without renown, then travel to another, but be careful that your luck in it be not the same as it was in the former. Dress well according to every state, and before you determine to transfer to a place study the manners, customs and beliefs of its people. Prepare for yourself a drug that changes colour, or a savoury drink, and announce in the new town that you are its discoverer

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and inventor, even though it never had any particular quality until it was honoured in the eyes of those with whom it was associated as something new. And if you are a surgeon, then announce that you have a method of treatment for one of the diseases common in the place to which you have transferred, and write about it in journals but using the words of their owners in praise of yourself, even if you give them more than the price of the advertisement.

"Then when you succeed, prepare thousands of boxes containing pills with your name, even although the pills are simple and devoid of remedy, and say that they cure such and such diseases. And make much of those who praise them, and associate with them testimonials from the town in which you used to be. (Do not be afraid of that nor apprehensive of those who, you said, testified to the excellence of your pills; thus you will become rich and famous and all your faults will be concealed.)"

Such are their methods in marketing their goods, and such their hopes and their delight. And the truth of the matter is that many doctors take to heart the *Book of* [p. 111] *B*———[1] afore-mentioned, and it is not long before they are richer than Ḳārūn[2] and more renowned than Luḳmān,[3] although they do not know about medicine what would cure the simplest of illnesses. I have never known any of the Westerners to be forgetful of the preceding rules. Nay, all of them act by them, according to their custom, and in doing so put forth every possible effort until the modern people of the East can scarcely compete with them.

Judenau (?) in his book sold in the streets of Paris summoned accurate witnesses of the truth of what he said, and certified it by notices published in his country's papers, so that a periodical (*Alimentation*) [p. 112] recorded this passage: "One of the celebrated physicians said that the citizens of Paris, in which city stupidity is on the increase, should take the Elixir of Judenau so that their mental powers may return to them."

[1] [I have been unable to find the pronunciation of this name; the Arabic is جلى. Tr.]
[2] [The Biblical Korah who appears in the *Koran* as the owner of fabulous wealth. See J. Walker: *Bible Characters in the Koran*, under *Korah*. Tr.]
[3] [The Arab Aesop, celebrated for his wisdom. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin Egypt MR1

But the testimony of the residents of Shāri'a al-Sarāi al-Ḥamrā in 'Abbāsīya[1] contradicts what they said of this success, as follows: "Verily we were deceived by the statements of our friends the residents of the city of Paris (if what was published in the papers about their statements were true). We used many glasses of that fluid and we became fools of people." Signed by the residents of Shāri'a al-Sarāi al-Ḥamrā.

The immoderate ones who lose their lives in frivolity and immorality and the frequenting of taverns and the indulging in pleasures and pernicious places, and who betake themselves to the Ezbekia district[2] to live and to the Grand Bar as a rendezvous—they indeed use glasses of Judenau. Thus they add stupidity to their wickedness, and they become discontented and declare: "This last experience has taught us that many of the statements of Europeans are impossible, because they have often used knowledge to expedite their trade only, and not for the benefit of the world. So they have deceived those who trusted them. No doubt most of their statements are false and mere guesswork. It is preferable to abstain from strong drink, thus neglecting their statements that cognac and beer take away turbidness and cause fatness. Since we have taken them or similar drinks we have been suffering constantly from continuous diseases and financial embarrassment, not to mention the punishment we are going to have in the next world."

Signed by those who were formerly deceived by the pretensions of modern civilization.

[1] [A district in Cairo with a well-known asylum. Tr.]
[2] [A neighbourhood in Cairo with an unsavoury reputation. Tr.]

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aswānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

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The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tafkira* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Ikhwīya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmiz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium ("influencer") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the "enchanter" to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But "in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalq. Tr.]

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." But in 773 To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, 121 and since the *Shabshaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were 276 accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have 114 seen that *hashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *hashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

4:Wa r E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khadra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbiya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shaikha*.]

"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places.

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows.

In the Gharbīya province, in a village called *Kafr Khiḍr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Ṭanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight.

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III

RHEUMATISM AND DONKEY MARROW

758 ONE of the ancient "prescriptions" successfully used for
278 *Ḥidār* of the joints (i.e. rheumatism) is taking the marrow from the feet of a dead donkey and rubbing it on the part affected for seven days. They go to extremes in the matter until the patient is compelled to bring it from remote regions, after his family have set spies and observers in all the villages to inform them of the death of a donkey, male or female. Sometimes they employ the fat of a camel or serpent.

The true explanation. It is possible that in the spinal substance of the donkey's bone there may be a soothing element, which the learned have not yet discovered. But it is very improbable that there is an element counteracting or removing inflammation, since a patient told me that that marrow is not exciting or burning, but that it is like ordinary fat. Perhaps it may here have some effect on muscular rheumatism, but in [p. 15] the case of rheumatism of the joints it is of little use.

IV

THE UNIQUE ELEMENT (AL-GŌHAR AL-FARD)

759 THOSE who go back to what we wrote in the first part
759 (page 24) concerning piles and dysentery (*rīḥ al-mash'ūmāt*) will know the secret of those fancies in the villages. But today the crowds of quacks are not satisfied with propagating their errors in the villages, but they go so far as to publish the same in the newspapers. I read in an Arabic newspaper an advertisement by a man called Abū 'Ujaiza of the village of Fīsha, residing in the dwelling of Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl in Ṭanṭā. He "cures" piles in the space of three days, at least,

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him !). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

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n55 n54 except in Allah ! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who " envied " you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory ; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an " old wife " who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the " Envied " and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the " Envied " poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

n89 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwāṭīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows :

n89 539

Oh, fine salt ! Oh, chaste substance !
Your mother is free ; your father, fine !
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains !
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die !

[n96] [1] [The '*Ashūrā*' is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

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789
539

Incense the mattress [*furrāḥa*] that brings you rest !
Incense the spoon from the eye of Muṣṭafā's mother !

Then he says:

My incense is fine stuff from the eloquent Prophet !
My incense is such and such from Our Lady (Zainab) ![1]
My incense is bewitched from Sīdī Barka.
My incense is received from Sīdī Madbūlī.[2]
My incense is Jāwī from Sīdī 'Ashmāwī.
Sindās, oh, Sindās ! Oh, Mursī ! Oh, Abū'l-'Abbās ![3]

Then he returns to the beginning and says:

Lo the eyes of the maiden are like cutting swords;
And the eye of the baker is hotter than fires.
Lo, the eyes of the water-carrier bring healing from Allah.
Lo, the eyes of the girl are hotter than a javelin;
But the eyes of the lad are more protective than a coat of mail.
Lo, the eye of the carpenter is sharper than a nail.
And the eye of a woman is keener than a scythe.
The eyes of a neighbour, fascinating and fickle,
Act with complete deception, saying:
Thou, oh, my neighbour ! wast praising Allah and grateful.
So remove the accursed thing from the home of this poor woman
That leaves her mourning.
Destroy the palaces and populate the graves.
I have incensed this basket from the eye of [p. 19] the mother of Ḥanna.
I have incensed these steps from the eye of the mother of Sālim.
Incense these mice lest they take the bread and send it to neighbours ![4]

[1] [Granddaughter of Muhammad. Tr.]
[2] [Well-known local saint in Cairo. Tr.]
[3] [Saint in Alexandria. Tr.]
[4] [The interpretation of these rhymes is largely conjectural, if not sometimes impossible. The Arabic text which is unvocalized is an unsatisfactory attempt to render the Colloquial Egyptian doggerel in terms of the defective Arabic script. See plate 4. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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989 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

955 231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

955 162 892 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

"THE BLUE WATER" AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either "moving" or "smiting," is very common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from "the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless "cures" whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counter-agent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]
[2] [See note, p. 54.]
[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

old "method" which is only of advantage to its practitioner, who lives comfortably in the shadow of its effect on the minds of simpletons.

X

THE "CURE" FOR ULCERS

THE "old wife" prescribes for the patients who are suffering from chronic ulcers (*nawāṣīr*) having fetid purulent secretions, the following "prescription": Mix one part of snuff (or tobacco dust) with one part of natron (its usual name [p. 22] is *atrūn*, and it is sesquicarbonate of soda). Pour on them two parts of very pure olive-oil and boil the whole for a while. Then anoint the tube of the ulcer (*nāṣūr*) and it will be cured.

Some excellent people have attested to me that it is a "cure" that has been proved by actual observation to be advantageous. It may be that time will show the truth of this experiment and beneficial remedy. But it is well known to-day that there is no cure for ulcers except scraping them with special instruments, or erasing the ulcerous tube, thus removing the cause, and sewing up the new wound. Sometimes cautery with a heated probe, or an electric cauterizer is employed.

Explanation of the "prescription." The snuff is a cauterizer, and on its entering the wounds it awakens their vitality, which has been weakened by the passage of time, and it changes the nature of the vile secretions for the better. Then fleshy pieces grow up filling the cavity of the ulcerous tube. (But that only results on the supposition that an ulcer is found continuing after the removal of its cause, such as ulcers resulting from a bullet which has entered a muscle deeply, and remains for some time with the surrounding part suppurating. Then it is extracted and the road leading to its original lodging-place has the appearance of [p. 23] an ulcerous tube. But appearances are not evidence).

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

THE "CURE" FOR ITCH AND DRY SCAB

AMONG the severest of the diseases that afflict mankind is skin-disease (or eczema) with its different varieties, either moist or dry. The "cure" for the dry variety among the "old wives" is to clothe the afflicted one in a garment of pure silk.

A very trustworthy person has related that he had not omitted to use everything prescribed by modern medicine, but without success. So he employed the silk garment and his ailment passed completely away. Indeed the prescription of the "old wife" agrees with what is set down in Canon Law regarding prohibiting men from wearing pure silk except in the case of itch.[1]

XII

THE "CURE" FOR PROTUBERANT TUMOURS

THE "old wives" do not stick at any of the diseases unless it is outside the sphere of trickery to affect its "cure." They do not trouble whether by the process of imagination, either through the power of the Jinn, or the development of thought, a "cure" will result. So beware of a very valuable "cure" for tumours which appear on the skin.

The patient seeks out a hen, free from blemish, without a single white feather, and watches her until she lays an egg in a place unreached [p. 25] by the rays of the sun. Then he brings lentils to her with their seeds to all appearance the same in number as the tumours on his body. After he has emptied

[1] [For the references to the prohibition of silken garments, see A. J. Wensinck: *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leiden, 1927, p. 45 f. Tr.]

955 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[954] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [953] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *felláḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *felláḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
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 F 164 F 757

bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

E F 278 757

I WAS one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *mufattaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūkka* or *ukka*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¾ lb. Tr.]

E [804]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

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After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*ḫiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

E F [832] [843]

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

F 164 757

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawalli, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawalli* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

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XVII

"WINKING" (ṬARFA)

164 SLIGHT shocks falling upon the eye-ball cause irritation which often leads to a dangerous state on most occasions. All such afflictions arising from an external influence are named 757 by the common people *Ṭarfa*. They have sundry "cures" for it. One of these is effective for the time being. It consists of closing the eyelid and placing the hand outspread above it. Then another person puts his mouth to this hand and blows upon it with his foul breath, deep breaths one after the other. [748] Shortly after we see them ordering the milk of a woman to be brought and a drop placed in the eye. Then it is "cured."

The true explanation. As for the blowing upon the eye, it is of little account, since it has no real influence upon it. But milk has been used since ancient times for placing [p. 33] in the eye for all light irritations which occur therein. It is very good. Many *koḥl* manufacturers still order it even to-day.

The true treatment. The handiest and simplest thing for the patient is to boil a little Greek camomile [*bābūnig Rūmī*] (or "the chickens of 'Ali's mother") and throw into that hot mixture a piece of tissue, which he places at once upon his eye for the space of a quarter of an hour for two hours. Remove all customary eye-salves. There is no harm in using human or animal milk, since it mollifies the inflamed condition. But if the eye is in a serious state, then the first thing is to hasten to an oculist.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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XVIII

A "CURE" FOR ITCH (GARAB)

ITCH is common among children in the elementary schools 164
in the villages on account of the meeting there of the many conditions which help its development, such as dirtiness, moisture and carelessness. They "cure" it in the beginning 157
by breakfasting every morning on a piece of "camel-driver's sulphur"—(Thus it is known among them. It is natural sulphide)—inside the yolk of an egg. If that is not successful there is the final "cure." The poor child is taken to the sewer of the village mosque [p. 34] and his body besmeared with those putrid substances, which they leave upon him for two complete days. Some of the Shaikhs of the villages exceed the bounds in the efficacy of this "cure." I have seen companies of them leading their boys to the sewer of Sīdī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūḳī at the time of the *Maulid* [or Birthday Festival] to perform with them there. This method is harmful and a hindrance to a real cure.

The true explanation. Nobody denies that compounds of sulphur are beneficial in the curing of all diseases that are named parasitic. But in spite of that there is no escape from observing cleanliness. Treatment by "camel-driver's sulphur" is good—(the sewer method, of course, is a quite different matter)—because the sedimentary substances contained in sulphurous substances touch the affected skin as agents and act strongly. So would that people smeared the body of the child with sulphur instead of with those filthy substances!

XIX

THE "CURE" FOR BALDNESS

THOSE exposed to being smitten by it in the villages are also 164
the children of the elementary schools, because, like the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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164 preceding, it is an infectious parasitic disease, and found in very hideous forms. Through neglect of it, and failure to attend to it at the beginning, it baffles physicians and becomes a danger.

757 The thoughts of the "old wives" are perplexed regarding its "cure." Some of them order anointing with petrol; others order tar and other substances. All are profitless. The famous method is "the cap of pitch" [*ṭaḳiyat-al-zift*] in other words, making the pitch (which is the resin of certain coniferæ) flow upon the head of the patient hot, in the form of a skull-cap[1] and leaving it for weeks, nay months. Then the quack comes one day to pull off the cap—a day of distress for the patient!—since his hair, nay his skin also, sticks to the pitch. So he suffers tortures, and blood flows after the terrible uproar of pulling off the cap. Very often the patient faints on account of the intensity [p. 36] of the pain and the great loss of blood. Then after that there is brought half an oke[2] of common salt crystals and the head of the patient is rubbed with them violently.

Do not ask about the pains of this savage method. After a month has passed the "operation" is repeated. There is no need to witness it to know that the second "operation" is more grievous than the first because the healing of the wound is not complete and the new skin is pulled off a second time, and the pains are doubled. In view of all this, say whether this method is advantageous with its violence and danger! Even if this method were successful sometimes, the success would be due solely to the exclusion of the air by means of the cap prescribed against the parasite, because it ranks as a parasite called aerobic, that is "air-loving."

[291] [1] [*Kalanswa*, or *ḳalansiya*, the name of a tight-fitting cap often worn under a turban. Tr.]
[2] [See above, p. 111.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

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XX

SHAHKA

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahka* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahka* (injury by the evil eye) or *nazra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [calumba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little, the soft paste is taken and

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR

E 750 378

applied to the wound. It resembles soft collodium[1] except that the latter is beneficial because of its transparency, which makes it allowable to witness the progress of the wound beneath it without the need of lifting it and causing the fleshy surfaces to bleed.

XXII

F

THE "REMOVED" HEART

164 753

We see the "old wives" diagnosing anæmia as "the removal of the heart and its being changed from its place as a result of an accident." They "cure" it as follows: The patient sits as in the case of *Takrīfa* (see Part I, p. 19) [p. 39] and the "old wife" sits down in front of him and places her fore-finger under the xiphoid cartilage, which they imagine is "the feather of the heart" (ريشة قلب) or its gristle. Then after moving it a little the "old wife" cries out, as if she had stumbled upon a buried person, saying: Oh, my child! Your heart is removed and the "feather" (*rīsha*) is falling considerably!

755

The true explanation. They assert that the xiphoid cartilage is bound to the heart by strong ties so that when the heart changes it pulls it in because it is like a tent-peg holding it firm. They "cure" the patients by one of two methods:

(1) The first is an endeavour to raise the above-mentioned "feather" to the top, i.e. returning it to its original position. It is necessary to resume this "operation" for seven days, the action lasting each day about ten minutes.

(2) The second is famous for its success. The patient is ordered to go to the door of a house opening on the west, and to hang by his right hand from that door in such a way that the side mentioned carries the rest of his body. He must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain thus without breathing for a space of time varying according to the ability of the patient. When he feels he is without power to retain his

[1] [Pyro-xylin, gun-cotton. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāḫela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be "cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 ḤASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his 752 numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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(Ḥasan Aghā) seizes this opportunity and smears a pebble 752
(which he had previously prepared [p. 43] with the help of hospital servants or surgical attendants) with the blood of the patient. After certain exertions and the display of a little effort (to complete the deception) he hands over to the patient the stone moist with blood. This is the method of Ḥasan Aghā who obtains enormous wealth in return for his fatigue and service on behalf of the Egyptian world. For his easy circumstances are due to many ignorant folk who are in a worse state than beasts of burden since there is no value in life or health among them. But it is a pity that Ḥasan Aghā 682
is to-day (June, 1894) engaged in prison, since the Government arrested him and the hand of Justice took revenge on him for killing one of the patients in his agency. Do not ask about what grief the people of those parts had when they suffered their famous "surgeon." We wish the excellent Aghā, aforementioned, a good life in penal servitude at Ṭurra[1] and we hope that Allah will inspire his devotees with intellect to guide them aright thereby, when the calamities of diseases afflict them.

XXVI

THE INJECTION WITH "THE BITTER TOY"

For long we have heard from people about extravagances 757
in the matter of injection, and that it produces fat in those who are lean and slender. When we asked certain people as to the composition of the substances entering into the injection they answered that that was the knowledge of the womenfolk. [p. 44.] Allah decreed, however, that a certain woman of Cairo came to indicate to me one day what it did to her daughter who complained of the flow of blood with the feces and violent dysentery. So I asked her concerning the cause. She hesitated a little; then she said: I went to an "old wife" famous for injection in order that she might attend to my daughter because she was lean. She produced "*the Bitter Toy*" (*al-la'ba al-murra*) and boiled it in pig's grease for half an hour, and then placed it in a metal syringe, and bade me hold the

[1] [A well-known convict establishment near Cairo. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

957 girl firmly and inject the liquid, which was boiling, into her anus. After that she began rolling her upon the tiled floor to smother her screams on account of the intensity of the pain. She fainted and we sprinkled water on her face. She has been ill ever since that day.

The true explanation. We do not know whether " the bitter toy " is what is named " bitter sweet " (*al-ḥulwa al-murra*)[1] or not. But on the supposition that it is, then we do not know of its possessing these peculiarities. We do not deny that the injection of fats and certain extremely greasy substances into the rectum has attained a certain repute in creating nourishment on account of the quickness of its absorption by a power greater than that of the stomach. But this savage method, namely, its injection at boiling-point, we have never heard of except in Egypt. No wonder she is the Mother of Wonders !

[p. 45.] In this place we call upon those who care to preserve the bloom and nourishment of their bodies not to follow the counsels of the " old wives," but to abandon those old absurdities. Let them be recorded in the history of the Past, because by placing them in history there is built up a new age. And especially (does this apply to) the inhabitants of Cairo, who claim nowadays to be humane and civilized.

[1] [Or *Dulcamara.* Tr.]

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EPILOGUE

MANY students have forced us to complete the printing of the Second Part of the *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, or "Old Wives' Medicine" by publishing what we have gathered in addition in the interval. Since our researches have been generally concerning the experiences of women in Lower Egypt, it is our hope that, in course of time when we have visited the regions of Upper Egypt, we may gather something of their customs and "cures." We leave this, if Allah pleases, as well as the "prescriptions" of the people of Lower Egypt, to Part III. And Allah is responsible if our work becomes useful and beneficial. 121

(The end of Part II. Part III follows it and begins with "The Congress of Quacks.")[1]

[1] [This Third Part, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was never published, and if ever finished, its present existence is unknown. Tr.]

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[Title Page]

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THE KARĪN AND KARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923,

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776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (pl. of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *ḳarīn*, or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *ḳarīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— ▯▯, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

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with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

773 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be
776 immune.

[751] The *karīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise
[843] she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born,
[304] when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of
[751] the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes
[761] that her *karīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karīneh*s the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 A *karīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed
753 the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karīn*. When he is sorry and expressed
[755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother
753 knows that her *karīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are
755 resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there
778 is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself
[787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 1/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 1/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

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woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] [825] [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] ?

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

? [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

778
755
[76A]

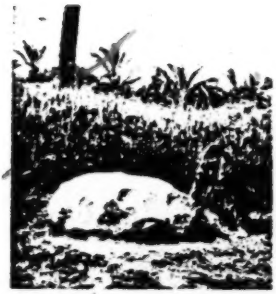

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHUN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S *karinah*.

751
843

باسم الله المنعت بالأقانيم هو الرحمن العظيم غالب جميع المظهرات القوية الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون ترتعد الملائكة من هيبته
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وذراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجاب
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل				
توكل يا ميكائيل				
توكل يا سرافائيل				
توكل يا عزرائيل				

توكل يا يا يال بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعرشه الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرمة
القرينة الملعونة وسعيها بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE KARÎN AND KARÎNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448–451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarīna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarīna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayūm and Asyūt Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarīna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *aḥrās* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the [751] iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyūt Province and also from one in Fayūm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellâḥîn*.[1]

FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *karîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Bahri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *karîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *karîn* and a woman a *karînch* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellâḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

6: Rasoul U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

WIENER VÖLKERKUNDLICHE MITTEILUNGEN

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6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit cau[illegible] her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her o[illegible] [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the [787] ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing [533] [535] during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band.

4. The musical band (1): 755 787 533 534

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass [535] clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted.

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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787

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/ [171]

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. [292] The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at [755] getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's [782] body, heart and brain.

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/81 cont'd/

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/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery.
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755
the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief 776
of the Abyssinians (15). 171

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents 755
of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the 776
word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general 177
term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies per- [171]
formed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", es- [171]
pecially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia.

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and 776
in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, [171]
mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God

(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217
(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257
(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balä Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [534]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [191]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

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Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

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[Title page]

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NATIVE PLOUGH IN EGYPT

BY

MOHAMED RIAD

Since millenia the cultivable soils of Egypt is confined to the Delta and 407*
the Valley of the Nile. This soil was deposited by the Nile through immemo- 241
rial times and as a result it is composed, generally speaking, of nearly 134
homogeneous fine particles which attain a mean depth of about 10 meters. The fact that such thickness and homogeneity of the cultivated soils rendering the minimum of soil variations has contributed much to the form and technique of the prevailing plough in Egypt. In fact the Egyptian plough is a simple one which is used to break the soil and not like other contemporary ploughs in Europe and elsewhere, does not invert the soil. This may be due to the aforementioned reason, i. e., the homogeneity of the soil, as much as other physical factors foremost among them are the yearly deposition of new soils through the agency of the flood on the one hand, and the penetration of air through the soil particles during the inter-planting period on the other hand. These factors and others 241
did not necessitate deep ploughing or soil inversion, and as long as these 407*
factors remained in control of the type of cultivation in Egypt—which it did all over the history of agriculture in Egypt, due to the system of Basin Irrigation,—the evolution of the Egyptian plough was and is very slow in what concerns the major lines of form and technique. Yet there exist in Egypt at the present time two substantially different types [184]
of ploughs which function in similar physical conditions but exist in different regions. Building a co-existence among these two plough types, mixed offshoots arose to balance the picture and to ease the sharpness of plough boundary in the relatively small cultivable area of Egypt. Now we can differentiate at least seven plough types each with [184]
a limited geographic area.

[p241]

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GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLOUGH TYPES

*407 184 The seven mentioned plough types which prevail in Egypt, reproduced in plates 1 to 4, are as follows :

Type I : the split handle, straight beamed type. This type prevails in both Western and Central Delta with the exception of the south-eastern area of Central Delta.

Type II : the single handle, curved beam plough. This type, one of the two basic ploughs in Egypt, prevails in the Eastern Delta roughly south of 31 degree of North Latitudes. It also exists in the south-eastern parts of the Central Delta.

Type III : the single handle, straight beamed plough. This type, being a mixture of both previous types, prevails spatially in the same region type II occupies.

Type IV : the right-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type prevails in the northern Provinces of Upper Egypt and reaches southwards as far as the boundary of Minya and Assiut Provinces. Nearly the same type prevails in the North-eastern Delta, roughly in a pocket to the north of Latitude 31, bordered by Lake Manzala to the East and north-East, and by the Damietta branch of the Nile's Delta to the West and north-West.

Type V : the obtuse-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type is the second of the two basic plough forms in Egypt, and prevails in southern Upper Egypt.

Type VI : the single handle, straight and short beamed plough. This [241] type is the usual garden type, and has many varieties, some wheeled while others are not wheeled but possess a fork-like extension of the beam, etc... This is extensively used in the Delta, and rarely found in Upper Egypt.

Type VII : the single handle, straight beamed, and wheeled plough. [241] This type is usually used in light soils, especially nearer to the edge of the desert in Eastern Delta.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PLOUGH

Though the aforementioned plough types differ among themselves 407 * yet there are some basic characteristics which combine them all. This being explained by the fact that they all labour in nearly the same physical conditions, hence the basic requirements must be similar. In the following lines we will try to describe these basic similarities, leaving aside for the moment their points of differentiations.

1. The Base. This is the 'foot' of the plough and is composed of a wooden body with a rear butt end and a tapering fore end. Its total length attains some 110 cms. a breast breadth of about 20 cms. and a thickness of about 15 cms. at the butt end. The thickness decreases towards the sharp end of the base owing to the fact that the upper surface is chiselled downwards from the butt end to the sharp point. The base supports the share, the handles, and the beam, and all these are fixed in different manners which will be described below with the exception of the share which is universally fixed to the fore end by a nail [414] in all types.

2. The Share. This being an iron blade which takes the form of a spear head and a neck. It also varies in size according to the kind of plough and soil. The standard share, usually called « Lisan 'Asfura » meaning the tongue of a sparrow – has the following dimensions: total length 45 cms, length of neck 15 cms, breadth of neck 11 cms, wings at broadest 15 cms. The share is fixed on the upper surface of the tappering end of the base by means of a screw or a strong nail, and [414] the share point must protrude some five centimeters ahead of the base point. A garden plough has a smaller share in what concerns the total length: this being only about 30 cms, while that of the plough intended to work on light soils or sandy areas has the same dimensions as the standard share except the breadth of the neck reaches 14 cms, and the breadth of the wings attains some 20 cms. Consequently the garden share is lighter than the standard share while that of the sandy areas is the heaviest of all.

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*407 3. Handles and Grip.—The handles are all over Egypt made of wood and attain the height of between 100 and 110 cms. As already mentioned the handle or handles are fixed to the base in different methods which will be explained later. The grip is also a wooden peg either protrouding longitudinally in the case of one handle, or split handle, or a cross beam fixed to the two handles in the double handled types. The handles and the grip serve in the Egyptian ploughs to control the manouvering of the plough and the depth of the ploughing and are handled either by one hand or both hands according to the manner in which the grip is fixed.

4. The Beam.—It is either a straight or curved wooden pole which is attached to the base in different ways, and serves to connect the whole plough with the yoke by inserting a cross peg in a socket holed at the fore end of the beam. The beam attains a length which varies between 300 cms. and 350 cms. and usually has a square cross-section of 10 by 10 cms.

5. The Pin.—This is an iron bar which attains the length of about 50 cms. and a breadth of about 4 cms. This type of pin prevails all over ploughes in Egypt except in type V where we find the pin made of wood. Moreover the iron pin has a set of holes in which a peg is inserted over the beam to prevent it from springing upwards during ploughing, and at the same time controls the angle of the plough.

492 6. The Yoke. This is a wooden pole of about 270 cms. in length, which is put on necks of the animals drawing the plough. To fulfil its purpose the yoke has five pegs; one in the middle to which the rope connecting it to the beam is attached, and two pegs at each end of the yoke to which the two ends of the rope which encircles the neck of the [184] animal are tied. Such a yoke is universal all over Egypt except in type VI [241] where the plough is drawn by one animal, thus requiring a small curved yoke to which the single animal is harnessed.

*407 Such are the basic parts of the Egyptian plough and the previous description will be found useful in both understanding the structure of the plough at large, and illuminating in the following comparison.

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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PLOUGH PARTS

407* [184]

1. The Base. – The above mentioned description of the base is well preserved in all types of ploughes in Egypt, but they differ in what concerns the way in which other parts of the plough are mounted on it. In all the types we find that the base is hollowed about its centre to enable to insert the pin but this hole is different in types IV and V because here we find that the pin – though of wood in type V and of iron in type IV – has a wooden supporter attached to it. In type III there is also a kind of supporter which does not function in the same way as in types IV and V, but it has its place next to the pin and thus a special cavity is necessitated near the hollow of the pin. Furthermore the base is bored at about 10 cms. from its butt end to insert the single handle of ploughs belonging to types II, III, VI, and VII. It is also found that the base of type II has another hollow between the hollow of the handle and that of the pin; this is used as a socket to insert the end of the curved beam inside the base. In types I and IV the sides of the base near the butt end are a little bit chiselled to enable to fix the lower ends of the split handle (type I) or the right angled handles (type IV) to the base, but the cavity in both sides is never deep and the lower ends of the handles remain protruding. Again in type V the sides of the base are chiselled deep enough to eliminate the lower ends of the curved handles from sticking out. As the arms of this curved handles are comparatively long, the sides of the base are chiselled all the way through more than a third of the whole length of the base. Moreover some 10 cms. from the rear end of this base the sides are again re-chiselled to the end to enable fixing the beam to the base. Thus we may conclude that the horizontal projection of the base will take a more or less regular form of a broad rear end tappering slowly forwards in all types except in type V where we will find it broadest near the middle and while tappering slowly forewards it also narrows rearwards in two definite steps. This special form of the base of plough type V is a necessary technical accomplishment due to the special form of the wide angled curve of the handles on the one hand and the method by which the beam is fixed to the base on the other hand.

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*407 2. The Handles.—There are four types of handles; the split handle in type I, the single handle in types II, III, VI, and VII, the double straight handles of type IV, and the double curved handles of type V. The method of fastening the handles to the base differ in each case. The [414] handles of type I are attached to the base by means of a strong nail to each side. The same method is also applied to type IV. Of the single handle we have already spoken: it is inserted in a socket near the rear end of the base. Concerning type V the arms of the handle are fixed to the sides of the base by means of two iron bands which encircle both arms and the body of the base. Nails are not used in this case, and to make a solid and compact unit of both handles and base in this type [414] wooden pegs are inserted between the two iron bands and the upper surface of the base to tighten the attachment of both components.

There are also some differences as to the angle at which the handles are put to the base and consequently to the share. In the single handle of types II, III, VI, and VII, and in the case of the double handled type IV the angle is nearly a right one. Split handles of type I has an angle of about 100 to 110 degrees, while the angle reaches 120 degrees in type V. It goes without saying that the retreating handles of both types I and V gives the ploughman more ability to manouver the plough from behind and increases his weight or force on the handles and on the plough to regulate the depth of ploughing. The single handled plough may appear at first glance to be technically deficient in this respect; but the structure of such a plough especially that belonging to type II allow for this deficiency by means of a fairly heavy beam which—being curved—is centrally situated on the base, thus giving the plough a more balanced situation which is lacking to a certain extent in types III, VI and VII. In these types there is still some balance as to the pressure of the plough owing to the fact that the beam, though straight, rests on the base at a distance more centrally situated than that of types I and V where we find the end of the beam resting on the rear end of the base. In type IV the handles are but little retreating while the beam rests on the of the base.

3. The Grip.—The form of the grip in all these types fall in two categories, the transversal grip of the double handled ploughs belonging

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to types IV and V, and the longtudinal grip of both the single handled plough types II, III, VI, and VII, and of the split handled type No. I. From the point of utility a transversal grip should be handled by both hands and thus precondition that the ploughman should go behind the plough. This is indeed the case in type V, but because the handles of type IV are not retreating rearwards it became awkward for the ploughman to handle the plough from behind, and it is usual in this case that he walkes, beside the plough griping it by his right hand. This way of handling the grip is also usual in the cases of the longtudinal grip of all other types. The longtudinal grip differ in form and length in the single handle types than that of the split handle plough. In the last named the grip is a small wooden peg inserted in the upper part of the handle from behind. This peg is so small that it deserves its arabic appellation «'Asfura» which means a sparrow or a little bird. In fact the ploughman in this type does not use this small grip and instead control the plough by the upper end of the handle. The grip in the case of single handled ploughs is usually a larger wooden peg which is inserted in a socket in the handles and protrudes from both sides of the handle. Thus the grip here serves to handle the whole plough. 407* 241 407*

4. The Share.—All the Egyptian ploughs use the varieties of shares already described above except the share of plough type No. V. Here the share has no wings or neck but take a regular form with a butt end in the rear and a sharp point on the foreward end. 407* [184]

5. The Beam.—We have already detected two kinds of beams in the Egyptian plough, namely the more commonly dispersed straight beam on the one hand and the curved beam which only appears in plough type II on the other hand.

The straight beam differ from one type plough to the other in many respects. In type VI it is to be noted that the beam is considerably short, and a cross pole is fixed to its extremity to enable either a double rope, double longtudinal wooden extension to be fixed at either ends of this cross bar, or a fork-like extension (see plate IV). This is a necessary technical adjustment for the one animal which is assigned to draw such

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*407 a plough. The beam of that type is fixed to the base by means of an iron band which encircles the base from underneath while its arms are fixed by nails to the beam. The iron band in this type and likewise in type III and VII is placed comparatively nearer to the middle of the base than to its rear. This being the case because in all these types the beam ends with a cavity in which the single handle of the plough is adjusted. thus the beam does not reach the rear end of the base, and simultaneously this special form of the beam end serves as a support or gives more strength to the way the handle is mounted on the base. In types I and V we find the iron band which fixes the beam to the base is placed on the rear of the base because the beam end penetrate between the split handles of type I and the double handles of type V. The beam of type IV also penetrates between the double handles of the plough. but it is fixed [414] to the base by means of a strong nail or a screw. The curved beam of type II is fixed directly to the base by inserting its end in the special socket bored in the base. To strengthen such an attachment a small peg is drawn in the socket behind the inserted part of the beam.

In type II it is very rare to find a tree branch or a piece of wood which can be carved to make the desired curve and still accomplishes the desired length of the beam. It became obligatory that an extension should be attached to the beam. and that is the cause that plough types of this kind are some times called « Mehrat be wasl» meaning a plough with an extension.

The beam extensions which we observe in types IV and V are also obligatory from the technical point of view. As the pin of these two types (iron pin in type IV and a wooden pin in type V) does not regulate the angle of the plough, but serve only to keep the beam from jumping upwards, it became necessary that another device must be made to regulate the plough angle. This is accomplished by the beam extension which is commenly an upward curved piece of wood fixed at its lower [414] end to the end of the beam by a wooden peg. The higher end of the extension is bored at different levels and by inserting a peg to which he rope connecting the plough to the yoke is fixed, the ploughman can change the angle of ploughing by puting the peg in a higher or a

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lower hole. One should again stress the fact that though the pin of type IV is made of iron and may have holes like all iron pins of other types, it does not work as a regulator of the plough angle, but the angle is regulated by the beam extension. We can also conclude that a beam extension is technically necessitated by the principles of structure of plough types II, IV, and V, while it does not figure out in other types unless it is added for the sole purpose of completing the length of a much used beam. 407*

6. The Pin. -The pin is used to serve two purposes: as an additional fastener of the beam to the base on the one hand, and to prevent the beam from springing upwards during the ploughing by inserting a peg through the pin over the beam, on the other hand. These two purposes are, universal in all types of the Egyptian plough. But while such functions are preserved in types II, IV and V, another important function is added to the pin in all other types; this being that of regulating the angle of the plough, just refered to above. To fulfil the two purposes of strengthening the beam-base connection and keeping the beam from springing upwards, the pin could be made of wood as it is the case in type V. But to regulate the angle the pin should be made of a different material other than wood. The pin as described above is comparatively short and not so thick as the beam or the yoke; it actually is essentially a sort of a peg. Now if this wooden pin is holed three or four times in the row which we observe in the usual iron pin used in Egypt, the result would be a certain inherent weakness in the wooden pin; because it will not resist the strength of pulling. This simply is the cause why the function of regulating the angle is assigned to the yoke extension in type V, where the wooden pin is used. In type II, the curve of the beam fixes once and for all the angle of the plough, and the pin of this type could easily be made of wood. But using an iron pin in type II is definitely an evidence of cultural adaptation owing to the fact that the area in which this type prevails uses an iron pin. In the case of type IV the iron pin is useless as to the function of regulating the angle of the plough, and its existance is also an evidence of cultural influences. [184] [184]

To relieve the animals from a part of the burden of carrying the whole weight of the yoke and beam, and to keep the beam from falling downwards,

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*407 a wooden supporter is put next to the pin. This is naturally not the case in type II where the curve of the beam keeps it standing upwards. In type I this supporter is also lacking.

GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS AND INTERRELATIONS FROM PHILOLOGICAL EVIDENCES

197 184 *407 It is obvious from both the list of appellations of different parts of the plough and maps on figures 1 and 2, that certain differences in naming the parts of the plough do exist in Egypt. These differences, apart from their importance to the study of dialects in Egypt, reveal some definite geographic regions the boundaries of which are supported by well known cultural elements and historical facts. If these regions which are detected from the study of plough are not totaly new, there is no doubt that their existence is reinforced by new evidences.

Region One: The Delta. The homogeneity of terminology in the Delta is striking. It is only on maps (c) and (d) of fig. 1 that we find a certain specialization in naming the handle and beam of the plough in Eastern Delta. This area is the domain where plough types II, III, VI and VII prevail. The philological differentiation in this respect is deeply rooted in the technicalities of these plough types: they are all single handled, hence these handles deserve the name of « Romh » spear in contradistinction to « Riesh » feathers which is applied to the split handle of type I. Because the beam of type II is curved, hence the term Ous = a bow or a curve. Though plough types III, VI and VII possess a straight beam, they are nevertheless called Ous. This is a fact which undeniably point that type II is of older age in the area, and furthermore gives an evidence that all these types are but off shoots of this type adjusted to the cultural milieu of Egypt as a whole (where the straight beam prevail): the beam changed but the old name persisted.

It is also observed that some appellations in the Delta do not belong to any arabic origin, but are derivations from the Greek or the Latin languages. Thus Winkler think that « Balanga » (= the pin of the plough)

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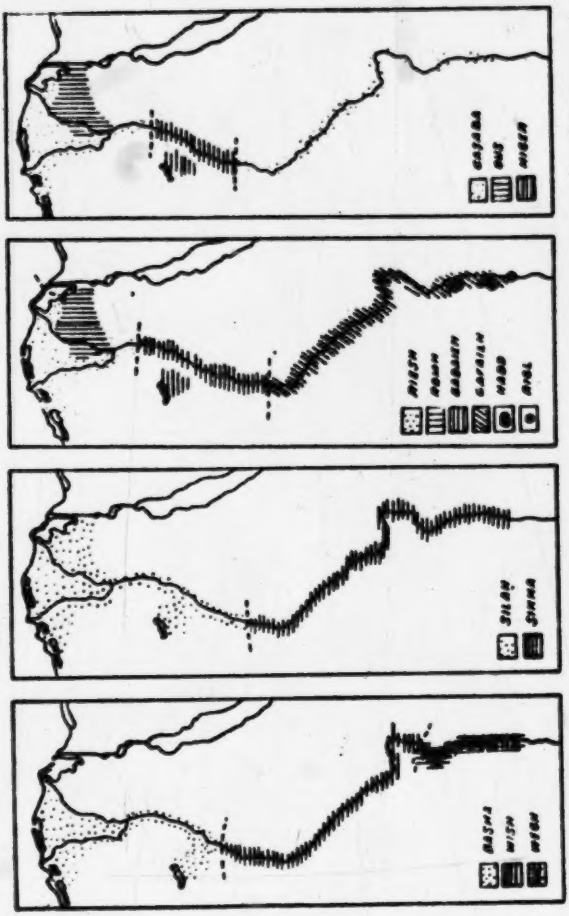

Fig. 1. Appellations of Plough Parts.

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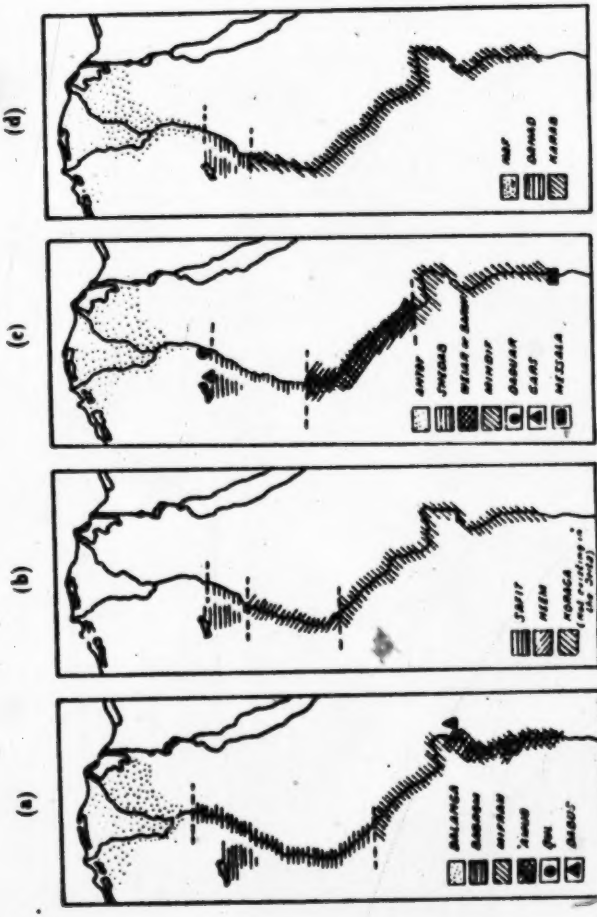

Fig. 8. Appellations of Plough Parts.

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point to the Italian word Bilancia[1]. In this way could we seek the origin of the term « Bazba » (= the base of the plough) to such origins? In addition to these foreign terms there are arabic names, e. g., « Silah » = blade or share, « Riesh » = feathers, « Romh » = spear, while the words « Antot » and « Nafs » may belong to the Coptic or ultimately to the Egyptian languages. In this way we may see that the Delta, though homogeneous, reveal three segmented linguistic and cultural layers: the Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, and the Arabic. This conclusion, supported by historical records, has its reasoning in the geographical situation of the Delta as the northern limits of the Egyptian Nile Valley, as the area facing the Mediterranean, and lastly as the area exposed to Arabia. 197 184 407*

If the Delta is established as one region, we can further divide it in two sub-regions. Leaning on the arguments stated above, the Eastern Delta would stand alone as a sub-region, while the other parts of the Delta would constitute the second sub-region. There is no part of the Delta other than its East which received so many human and cultural elements from the Middle-East and Arabia and it happens that that part, in what concerns the plough, is remarkably different in terminology and technique. This area, where type II is at home, did not only account for the several offshoots of plough forms (types III, VI, VII) but also affected the manner in which the ploughman controls his plough. All over the Delta and Middle Egypt the ploughman marches beside his plough where a split handle or a double handle is used. This, as Winkler rightly pointed out[2] is due to the influence of plough Type II, where the ploughman always walk to the left of the plough. In the same source, Winkler claims that this habit of going beside the plough in itself is an evidence of the prior spread of plough II all over the Delta and Middle Egypt[3]. But we must not build a whole theory upon one factor. It is true, as we shall see below, that a curved beamed plough was discovered in Fayum dating to the Roman Period, but this plough was not single 407* 184 [197] [241]

(1) Winkler, H. A., 1936, p. 164.
(2) Winkler, 1936, pp. 148, 150.
(3) Winkler, 1936, pp. 150, 163.

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* 407 184 handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the ploughand all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

197 184 * 407 *Region Two :* Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e. g.. « Wish» and « Wegh» or « Wijh» — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien» or « Gafaien» (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish» for the base, « Sikka» for the share, « Gabaien» for the handles, « Gasaba» for the beam, « Koraga» for the beam extension, and « Karab» for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences [197] from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Baharif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (c) of fig. 1 and map (c) of fig. 2. On map (c) fig. 1 we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Hadd [114] is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities—

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Keih and Benban were given this terminology by Winkler[1]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennasr, Abu Ibny, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramadi South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of «Wegh» and «Wijh», for the base, «'Amud» instead of «Miftah» for the pin, and «Mindef» instead of «Weiar» or «Barufe» for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North. 197 184 407* [114]

Region Three: Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area: a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide it to three sub-regions: Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity: the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolised in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have «Higr» for beam, «Bagrom» for pin, «Saffit» for the beam extension, «Shaddab» for the cross peg of the beam extension, and «Danad» for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins. [177]

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[1] Winkler, 1936, p. 153.

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either in the Fayum Coptic or with a mixture of Greek origins, for we know that Fayum was once one of the important centers of the Greek Ptolomies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH

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It is a well established fact that the first recorded form of plough is found on the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Many drawings from the Old and the New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt can give us a picture relevant to question of the evolution of the plough. There is also a coloured wooden figure of the plough which belong to the 11th or the 12th dynasty kept in the British Museum, and many original ploughs were found near Fayum which belong to the Greek and Roman periods of the history of Egypt, and which are kept in the different Museums of the world, e. g. Cairo and Berlin. All these examples of the plough covering a very long time span can be used as a sound basis for the study of the history of the present Egyptian plough, if we add to it the description of the plough in the 18th century A. D., recorded by Norden (1), and by the scientists of the French Expedition to Egypt (2).

In an unpublished report in the Agricultural Museum of Cairo, a short note is written on the subject of the ancient Egyptian plough. Extracts from the note runs as follows :

> « The ancient Egyptian traditions alledge that the Egyptians are indebted to Osiris, God of Plants in the Egyptian Panthacon, for the knowledge of the plough. Evidences from early drawings proove that the plough in its original form was worked only by man, and it was only drawn by oxen in the drawings of Meidum, i.e., begining from the third Dynasty. In that form the plough had only one wooden share for ploughing the soft soils ; and had a double wooden share covered by a sheet of bronze to plough harder soils.... The plough was called in the Egyptian language SIKKA. »

(1) See references under Norden.
(2) See references under Girard.

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In this note it is interesting to see that before the third Dynasty (the beginning of this Dynasty is attributed by Erman to be about 2900 B.-C.)[1] the Egyptians used hoes to break the soil, or at least that is what one can understand from the phrase « the plough in its original form was worked only by man». Drawings of hoes used to break the soil came to us from the remains of the first Dynasty[2]. The plough in its early form, and throughout the Old Kingdom, was composed of a wooden share to which two short handles were fixed from the rear end of the share, while a long beam was fixed to it from the center. The beam ended with a yoke which was at that time attached to the horns of the drawing oxen. In the Middle Kingdom there was no development to this plough, but

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> ... in the New Kingdom we see that the handles became longer, and hand grips were added to the handles. We also see that the yoke was replaced by another type which is not attached to the horns, but which rests on neck of the animal ... this method was taken over from the method of saddling the horse... »[3].

Of special interest in the note of the Agricultural Museum of Cairo cited above, is the appellation of the plough in Ancient Egyptian. Sikka as the name of the plough was conserved till now in Arabic Egyptian, and is used to denote the share of the plough in Upper Egypt[4]. Sikka as the name of the plough in Ancient Egypt may have been supplemented by or was used along with another name : [197]

> « ... The name of a plough was HEBI; ploughed land appears to have been ART, a word still traced in the Arabic HART... »[5].

Wilkinson states that the Ancient Egyptians as observed by Diodorus, used hoes extensevely, but on occasions used light ploughs which traced slight furrows, while other peasants followed the plough with hoes to

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[1] Erman, p. 26.
[2] Erman, p. 496, footnote 4.
[3] Erman, pp. 496-497. Also see plate 8 of this article.
[4] See list of appellations given in this article.
[5] Wilkinson, Vol. II, p. 393.

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break the tenacious soil. He continues to describe the plough in Ancient Egypt at large as follows :

« The ancient plough was entirely of wood and of a very simple form like that still used in Egypt. It consisted of a share, two handles ; and the pole or the beam ; which last was inserted into the lower end of the stilt, or the base of the handles, and was strengthened by a rope connecting it with the heel. It had no coulter, nor were wheels applied to any Egyptian plough : but it is probable that the point was shod with a metal sock, either of bronze or iron. It was drawn by two oxen ; and the ploughman guided and drove them with a long goad, without the assistance of reins which were used by the modern Egyptians. He was sometimes accompanied by another man, who drove the animals, while he managed the two handles of the plough ; and sometimes the whip was substituted for the more usual goad. The mode of yoking the beasts was exceedingly simple. Across the extremity of the pole a wooden yoke or cross-bar, about fifty-five inches or five feet in length was fastened by a strap ... At either end of the yoke was a flat or slightly concave projection, of a semi circular form, which rested on a pad placed upon the withers of the animal, and through a hole on either side it passed a long thong for suspending the shoulder pieces, which form the collar. These were two wooden bars, forked at about half either length, paded so as to protect the shoulders from the friction ... »[1].

It is in the Greek and Roman Periods in Egypt that we see another development over the plough of the New Kingdom. Indeed we find in the two types whose sketches are reproduced on plate 6, the prototypes of some of the present ploughs in Egypt. The plough which was found in Darb Gerza (Plate 6 b) the origin of which is kept in the museum of Berlin, present us with a wooden share and base much similar to the base of the above described plough type V ; the sides of the base are chiselled in two steps, one to adjust the handles, and the other to fix the beam. The only difference which may be observed in the method of fixing the handles is that it may have been fixed by nails and not with bands like type V. It is also to be noted that the beam was holed at its rear end to enable to

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[1] Wilkinson. Vol. II, p. 390-393.

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insert the rear of the base through it, and a nail may have been used in the projecting part of the rear of the base to prevent the beam from sliding out. This much complicated method was substituted by the simpler method of attaching the beam to the base by means of iron bands used now in type V. The beam here is the usual straight beam used in much of plough varieties in Egypt, but in this prototype there is no pin. Instead and in place of the pin socket in the contemporary ploughs, there are two parallel holes in the base, and a rope end is passed in one of these holes then reappears from underneath in the other hole, then passed over to be wind on the beam. In this way it is certain that the angle of the plough never changed unless the rope was changed. On the fore part of the base there are no traces of nailing a metal share to it, but this does not exclude the possibility that the metal share was adjusted to the base not by nails but by bending the edges of the metal round the sides of the base. This may be proved by the various metal shares especially of iron—which belong to the Greco-Roman period, and whose origin are kept in Berlin. 407* 174

The plough which was discovered in a house at Harit in Fayum (plate 6 a), and which belong to the Roman period, is kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This type gives up a combination of both contemporary types II and V, as it is clearly exemplified by the presence of a curved beam, and projecting double handles. The very characteristics of the curved beam are represented here: the beam extension which is permanently fixed here with palm fibers, and the pin which supports the beam is made of wood and attached to the beam, not through inserting in a socket, but by binding it to the beam by a rope, probably of palm fibers too. The beam, neverthless, is additionally fixed by a method which is not found in type II, but by a method retained in the southern tip of Upper Egypt, and in an altered method in Tripoli.[1] This being a rope connecting it to the handles as it is clearly seen in the sketch. The handles are projecting rearwards, and fixed to the base by nails, though another fastner, a rope, tightens them to the base. The grip is lacking in this plough, and the cross bar which figures in the sketch between the two handles may have strengthened the handles, rather than functioned as a grip.

[1] [See category 116, End plate VIII --Analyst]

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Baumann, agree to the fact mentioned above, namely that the development of the plough was sharpest with the begining of the Greek and Roman Periods, and describes another form the Egyptian plough from the late period, whose origin is kept in Berlin Museum in the following lines :

> « Wichtig aber ist, dass auch der altägyptische Pflug zu diesem Typus gehört, wenn er auch durch seine Doppelsterzigkeit äusserlich etwas anders erscheint. ... Durch alle Epochen bis zur ptolemäischen Zeit blieb der Pflug mit wenig Änderungen sehr ähnlich... Das in Berlin befindliche Fundstück aus der Gräberstadt im westlichen Theben zeigt eine starke Knickung der Sterzen. Hier mündet auch der Grindel ein. ... Dieser altägyptische Pflug hat im modernen Ägypten seine direkte Fortsetzung gefunden in den hier auftretenden zweisterzigen Pflügen, die allerdings schon wesentlich komplizierter erscheinen. Hier zeichnet sich eine richtige, von der Sterze getrennte Sohle ab, ohne dass aber in den meisten Fällen der Charakter des alten Spaten-Pflugs verloren geht » [1].

It is clear from this quotation that Baumann holds the opinion that though the Egyptian plough has undergone several changes from early dynastic period till the present time, still it holds to its basic spade-like character. This opinion is not only Baumann's, but we also find similar opinion in Winkler [2] and both of them based their conclusions on the extensive studies of Leser [3]. And it is a fact that though the different types of the Egyptian plough may be so complicated in their structure, yet they function on the same principles of a hoe. But we should be aware of the fact that pushing this material similarity far to the realm of culture would lead to much misunderstanding. Using animals in this plough is in itself an evidence of the cultural differences between hoe and plough cultivation, not to mention other differences in techniques of ploughing, production, of crops, and the many other social implications.

Not much description of ploughs in Egypt occur after the Christian Era, and it appear that slow variations took place during this long

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(1) Baumann, p. 313.
(2) See references under Winkler.
(3) See references under Leser.

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period; variations which took place due to cultural influences encroushing upon Egypt. but while accepting such influences, we are inclined to think that from the Greco-Roman Period onwards, the forerunners of the Egyptian ploughs were fixed; and throughout two millenia, mixture, selection and adaptation played their role in founding the existing plough types. We cannot ascertain any date for the different existing types, but we may say that they do existed in Egypt in a form very near to its present form since at least three centuries. This may find a support in the drawing of the plough by Norden [1] who flourished in the 18th century, and visited Egypt around the middle of that century. It can be also attested by the drawings and description of the Egyptian plough by the scientists of the French Expedition which took place late in the 18th century.

Norden drew a plough in the village Gamase in Upper Egypt, and from the sketch of Norden one can see that plough belong to type IV of the northern part of Upper Egypt. The base may be larger than in reality, and the beam is fixed to the base by a rope instead of the usual nail. The beam extension is present, but not curved upwards like the present extension in both types of Upper Egypt. The whole drawing seems to be more or less stylish in some points, though it gives a good idea about the form of the plough at that time.

The plough drawn by the French in «Description de l'Egypte» [2] is said to belong to lower Egypt (the Delta) and around Cairo. In his comment on the drawing, Girard states :

> «Nous dirons seulement que celle (charrue) est particulièrement en usage dans la basse Egypte est aux environs du Kaire : celle de la partie méridionale du Sa'yd est beaucoup plus légère et beaucoup plus grossièrement travaillée.
>
> Pour se former une idée de cette dernière, il suffit de concevoir deux pièces de bois d'un mètre de haut, coudées naturellement à leur extrémité inférieure sous un angle de cent degrés environ. Ces deux pièces, ... sont retenues fixement, à un décimètre de distance l'une de l'autre, par deux chevilles ; l'une a quatre décimètres

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[1] Norden, pp. 54-55, and plate LVI.

[2] See references under Girard.

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et l'autre à un mètre au-dessus du même coude. Cette dernière cheville les traverse toutes deux, et présente extérieurement deux poignées par lesquelles on peut la saisir[1].

The assumption that such a plough may be found around Cairo may be right. Furthermore it is implied that this type prevails in middle Egypt, because Girard specialised another plough form for the southern part of Upper Egypt. This plough belong, in our classification, to type IV. If we remember the geographical distribution of plough types, type IV also exist in a pocket between Damietta branch and lake Manzala, but other parts of the Delta belong to different ploughs. Therefore the generalisation of Girard as to the presence of this type all over the Delta is erroneous. Furthermore, making the double handles of the southern Upper Egyptian plough, is not as simple as the description of Girard may convey to the reader. It is rare to find two pieces of tree branches which have the same angle, and as we have seen one of these ploughs in process of making in the desert edge of Luxer district and in the desert edge of Ramadi South—areas culturally poor by the mere facts of there geographical locations and isolations—we are inclined to think that working out the desired angles of such handles needs a good deel of traditional labour and workmanship. Yet complicated techniques are evidences of conservatism rather than progress, hence we can assign older age to ploughs belonging to type V, than for example those of type IV.

This discussion leads us to the crucial question : How did the present types evolved into their different forms?

We have already stated that plough types of the Greek and the Roman periods which we have already described, formed the prototypes of the present ploughs in Egypt. They combined the curved beam, and the double handles in one form or the other. In our classification of plough types we have refered to two basic types, namely the curved beamed type, and the double handled type. Each of these types has his own cultural and geographical region : the first type reigns in the Eastern Delta, while the second type occupies the southern parts of Upper Egypt.

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(1) Girard, Vol. XVII, pp. 22-25.

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Now the plough of Dynastic Egypt was more or less double handled, and if the discoveries in Upper Egypt or Fayum reveal, even through the Greek and the Roman periods, the constance of double handles, there is then no doubt that such a characteristic in the Egyptian plough is obviously very old. Again if we consider another part of the plough, namely the beam, we find that the straight beam figures out in all ancient findings, until curved beam appears suddenly in the Roman period, side by side with the straight beam. This sudden appearance is only confined to Fayum, no evidence known refer to the appearance of the curved beam in Upper Egypt, but it is highly probable that curved beam appeared also in different parts of the Delta. We must notice that the curved beam of Fayum appeared in connection with a double handled plough—a fact which either indicate that that type of beam originated with the double handled principle, or that it originated in association with the single handled plough. In view of the constant appearance of the curved beam with the single handle, not only in contemporaneous Egypt, but also in Southern Palastine, Tripoli [1], Tunisia [2], and in South Arabia [3], we may conclude that the combination of double handles and curved beam of Roman Fayum represent an adjustment of the curved beam incrusion southwards from the Delta. All this discussion means that the roots of the present type V plough are definitly older than prototype of plough type II.

Leser in his studies of the plough has settled down the problem of the curved beam plough. In his steps followed both Winkler and Baumann. Winkler states :

> « Der Krümelpflug weist nun deutlich nach Griechenland und Italien hinüber, dort ist dieser Pflug seit sehr alter Zeit zu Hause. Wenn wir zur Bezeichnung der Griessäule das romanisch Balangs (Latienisch oder italienisch Bilancia) finden, dürfen wir vermuten, dass dieses Wort besonders am Mittelmeerpflug, dem Krumelpflug, gehaftet hat » [4].

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[1] See plate 8, drawings of the plough of Palastine and Tripoli based upon information furnesbed to me by some palastinian and libyan students in the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Cairo.

[2] See plate 8 c, after Baumann.

[3] See plate 8 d, drawn upon photograph 37 in Helfritz (see references under Helfritz).

[4] Winkler, p. 163.

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We have no doubt that the single handled curved beamed plough belong to the Mediterranean cultural region, and because Egypt, though lying on the coasts of the Mediterranean, represent in its greater part a somewhat isolated area (especially Upper Egypt), it has evolved its plough type according to its needs. Furthermore Egypt in nearly all its Dynastic history was an independent state, and perhaps that helped towards keeping traditional impliments. When the Greek family of the Ptolomies consolidated its rule in Alexandria, Egypt was open now to the influences of the Greek-Mediterranean culture. This still attained its zenith during the Roman occupation of Egypt. From the Roman period onwards Egypt was part and parcel of successive macrocosmos, namely the Roman Empire, the Arabic Empire, and the Turkish Empire. We are sure that so much influences played its part in the development of the Egyptian plough, but these influences did not overcome the two handled plough, which resisted these encroushments and succeeded to remain nearly intact in southern Upper Egypt, and co-existed with the mediterranean single handled plough in the Delta, intact in its isolated pocket in the Prarues of Lake Manzala, and in the northern parts of Upper Egypt. It is only in most parts of the Delta which was incessantly under the influence of the Mediterranean, that a compromise between the Egyptian double handle-straight beamed plough and the Mediterranean single curved-straight beamed type, took place in the plough types I and III, i. e., the split handle-straight beamed type, and the single handle-straight beamed type. The characteristics of plough type I gives us every reason to conclude that it leans heavily on the principle of the Egyptian double handled plough, the only compromise is that the handles are united in the upper part, but the projection of the handles was kept to a certain degree, together with the straight beam. Type III inclines more to the Mediterranean plough in keeping the single handle, but the compromise took place in the change of the curved beam to a straight beam.

One can now safely conclude that the evolution of the Egyptian plough took the following periods and events :

1. Throughout Dynastic Egypt the double handled-straight beamed plough persisted all over Egypt. This plough deserve the appellation

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of the Egyptian plough due to its archaic age. In its relatively purest form it survive in plough type V. 174 177 407 *

2. Begining of the Greco-Roman period the Mediterranean plough extended over many parts of the Delta, and the northern part of Upper Egypt including Fayum. But we are certain that it did not exist in its pure form, at least in Fayum, and was adjusted to the double handle principle. In its pure form it persist now in Eastern Delta. This fact may be explained by the everlasting stream of Arab settlers in this part of the Delta—being geographically exposed to Arabia. Plate 8 show us that the Arabs of Palastine, and those of Hadramut use the Mediterranean [171] plough. The same plough is used in the Oasis of Siwa, the coast West of Alexandria, and in Libya and North-west Africa. It is only Western and Central Delta which break through this continuous distribution of the Mediterranean plough. One can conclude that this plough type did not reign over the Delta as a whole, even in the Greco-Roman period. We must not imagine that as soon as it came to Egypt, it expelled the older double handled plough. We should also bear in mind that neither the Greek nor the Romans ploughed the land themselves, but formed a governing aristocracy in Egypt. It is highly probable that this plough type gained sure footing after the Arabic settlement in the Eastern Delta. This is due to the fact that the Arabs settled down and cultivated the land themselves somewhere around the 10th century. Bearing this in mind however, does not negate the pre-Arab existance of this plough in different parts of the Delta.

3. Plough type IV, which retains most of the characteristics of the type V, was affected but slightly by the Mediterranean plough. This may be prooved by the fact that the handles does not retreat or project rearwards, but are fixed at nearly right angles to the base. This is a special characteristic of the single handle of the Mediterranean plough.

4. Plough type I has been already mentioned.

5. Plough type III, has been also mentioned, but we may add that this type probably represent the newest adaptation of plough types in Egypt.

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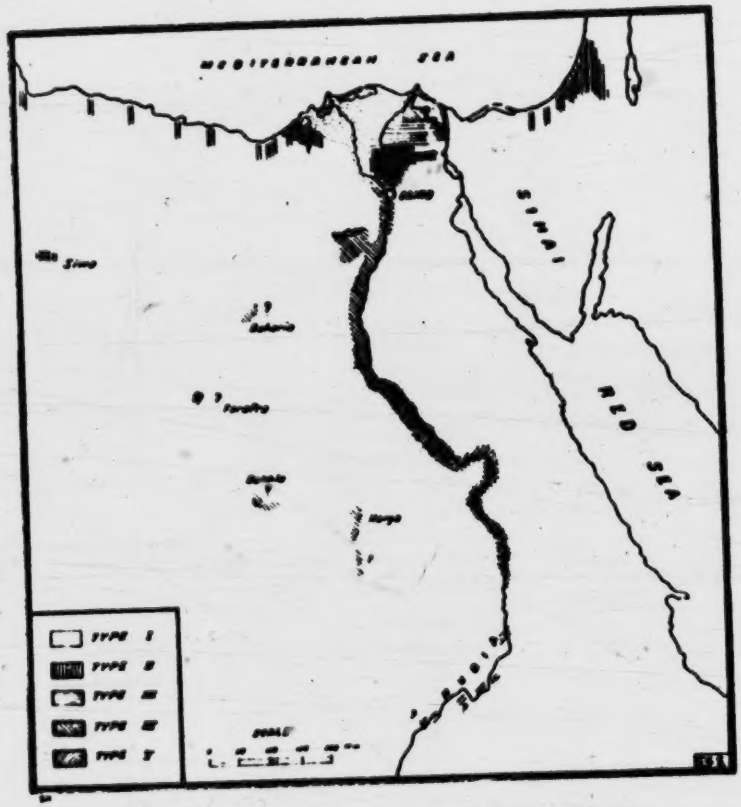

Fig. 3. Regional Distribution of Plough Types in Egypt.

RETROSPECT

171 *407 The basic plough types just described are not exclusive to Egypt. We have already seen that plough type II has a wide diffusion in North Africa and the Middle East. It may also exist in Tibit, if the drawings reproduced by Ratzel [1] are true. But already in Tibet we see another

[1] Ratzel, Vol. III, p. 384.

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plough type, which though straight beamed, has no other similarieties with the straight beamed Type III of Egypt, but had connections to ploughs of East and South-East Asia. 171 407*

In any case the plough in Africa is confined to the area north of the Sahara, in addition to its isolated existence in the Highlands of Ethiopia. The southern limits of the plough was observed by Ratzel [1], who drew the southern limits from the south of Morroco, includes most of the Sahara, excluding only Mauritania, and ending by Abyssinia. Baumann disagree with Ratzel and states that the plough is to be found only in three regions :

> « ... haben wir aber in Afrika ein fast zusammenhängendes Gebiet das von Marokko über Algerien und Tunis nach Ägypten und Abessinien führt, wo alte mittelländische und westasiatische pflugkultur beheimatet ist. Die in diesent Raum einschneidenden Lücken (Libyen, Gebiete östlich des mittleren Nil) werden durch das Dazwischentreten nomadisieren der Hirtenvölker erklärt » [2].

Thus Baumann see that the three areas where the plough is to be found in Africa are not connected due to the arrival of the nomads in Libya and Northern Sudan. This may be true but we find a native Mediterranean plough in Tripoli, and in the Oasis of Siwa. This may mean that there is some sort of connection of plough between Egypt in the East and Tunis in the West. Baumann may have been impressed by the reports of different travellers across the Sahara, who did not observe any plough in the Oasis of the Algerian and the Libyan Oasis. but Herzog rightly quotes Rohlfs who stated the existence of the plough in the Egyptian Oasis of Daḫla and Ḫarga :

> « ... dass man sich in einer Oase des pfluges bediente, war mir ganz neu. Weder hatte ich die Anwendung dieses Gerates in Draa, Tafilet, oder Tuat gefunden, noch in der grossen und ausgedehnten Oas Fessan » [3].

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[1] Ratzel, Vol. I, map facing p. 21.
[2] Baumann, p. 310.
[3] Rohlfs, p. 298, in Herzog p. 201.

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171 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia,
*407 and says that an Egyptian governer of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dahla and Harga use a plough which at least in Harga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts —for as such we would have found plough type V —but can only be explained by the human hazard. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis
[467] with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis.

PROSPECTS

241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood —with its renewal of the fertility—then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil —which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in souther Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil —which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqy». This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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(1) Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough
[114] type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong to the Egyptian type I, i.e., the split handled plough.

(2) Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

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Since the application of the system of perennial irrigation 150 years ago, no actual «Sharaiy» is applied to the land, and this is one of the causes of smaller production. We do not mean to hold back the history, because perennial irrigation gives Egypt the possibility of fitting in the economic picture of the world through the cultivation of cash crops together with industrial crops (e. g., cotton and sugar-cane). Egypt cannot afford to retreat to basin irrigation, but on the contrary, all basin land will be converted in the near future to perennial irrigation, after the completion of the High Dam project. Problems of the increasing population of Egypt, added to the land hunger, needs all efforts to make the best out of the situation by increasing the crop area and its output.

Now the plough types which we have described are all of the kind which break the soil and does not invert it. This kind of ploughing only makes superficial furrows, thus does not penetrate deep. Such a method was sufficient in basin irrigation, because the soil took its due rest and airing in the Sharaiy period.

If these ploughs were substituted by a plough type which plough deeper and, which invert the soil, we may, in this way, compensate, to an extent, the lack of Sharaiy, by exposing more soil to the air, and simultaneously by letting the air penetrate in the deeper furrows which would result from such ploughing. This though may appear a bit theoritical, it deserve an experiment. So far as we know, some big land oweners use mechanical ploughs. All we need is to study the output of such ploughed lands and compare it with other land ploughed by the native wooden plough. In such a study one must take in consideration much different elements. For example one should not compare the mean output of a feddan in a big estate with that of very small holding. Small holdings though wide spread in Egypt —does not represent the usual agricultural pattern, but it is more like horticulture. In a small holding the members of the family actually work every bit of land manually. We should then compare the output of big holdings using wage labour, and using on the one hand wooden ploughs and on the other hand mechanical ploughs.

If mechanical ploughs are found useful in increasing the output, there is another problem which should be faced; small holdings cannot afford such costy ploughs. But the roots of overcoming such a problem may be

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241 found in what we have observed in a small village in Central Delta.
[243] To thresh corn the Egyptians use a special cart or wagon with sharp-edged iron wheels which is drawn either by one or two animals. This implement is used since a very long time in Egypt. Some five years ago the peasants of this village —and probably in many places in the Egypt— can hire a tractor of a rich neighbour, and let the tractor pull three to five threshing waggons, one behind the other. In this way a work of a week done by the slow animals and one cart, is done in a day or two by the quick tractor and the triple number of threshing waggons. In a similar way mechanical ploughs can be used. The spread of mechanical ploughs would end, among others, in the following results :

1. Quick ploughing would result in relieving many working hands for other periodic wage-labour, increasing thus the private income.

2. Relieving the animals from a part of their hard work, thus enabling Egypt to develop animal husbandry and dairy production.

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7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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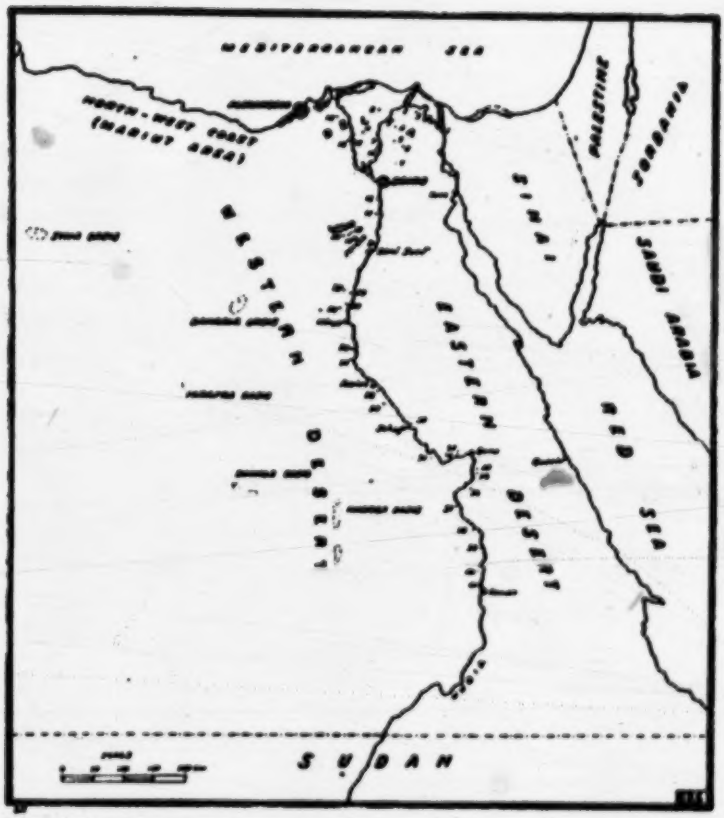

Fig. 4. Names of Localities where Studies on the plough were carried out.

[103]

1. Qantara West.
2. Genemia.
3. Bugrat.
4. Nub.
5. Ibrahimia.
6. 'Ezbet Maher.
7. Bilbies.
8. Biesla.
9. Zefta.
10. Sa'ad Pacha.
11. Shony.
12. Mishla.
13. Kamshush.
14. Sanhur.
15. Netma.
16. Tammu.
17. 'Ayat.
18. Fidimin.
19. Sinero.
20. Zeid.
21. Mun'aria.
22. Eshab'iy.
23. Beni Mazar.
24. Gebesna.
25. Shoshe.
26. Mallawi.
27. Garf Serhan.
28. Nazlet 'Abdelle.
29. Aulad Mohamed.
30. El-'Ezbi.
31. Aulad 'Amran.
32. Abu Mana'a.
33. Eyaberiat.
34. Kiman.
35. Harragia.
36. El-'Ammari.
37. Noussir.
38. Kelh.
39. Ramadi-South.
40. Benhan.
41. Baharif la.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Appellations Regionally Used to Different Parts of the Native Plough in Egypt.

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Place of Observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	Handle grip	Beam
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (2)	Bazba	Silah	Romh		Maqbad	Ous
Genemia (2) (1)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Busrat (3) (1)	•	•	•	—		Asaba
Nub (3)	•	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Gos
Ibrahimia (1)				Gafiez	•	•
'Ezbet-Maher (1)				•	•	•
Bilbies (2)	•	•	•	Afiez	Abda	Ous
Bilbies (3)				—	•	•
Ibrahimia (1) (–)					Gabda	Gos
'Ezbet-Maher (1) ( )				—	•	•
Bilbies (2) ( )	•	•	•		Abda	Ous
Bilbies (3) ( )						
Bilbies (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Bilbies (2) (+ +)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Central Delta :						
Bircata (2)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Bircata (2) (+) I)	—	•	•	—	•	—
Zefta (2)	Rasba	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Asaba
Sa'ad Pasha (1) ( )	•	•	•	—	•	Ous
Shony (2)	•	•	Riesh	—	Iryd	Asaba
Mishla (1)	•	•	Raiesh	—	'Oukza	•
Kamshush (3)	•	•	•	—	Rimh	•
Kamshush (3) (+)	•	Lisan el 'asfur	•	—	•	Ous(— —)
Western Delta :						
Sanhur (3)	•	Silah	Riesh	—	—	Gasabi
Netma (1)	•	•	•	—	'Oukza	Asaba
Middle Egypt :						
Tamma (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	Abda	Asaba
'Ayat (2) (+)	•	•	Gabaien	—	•	Higr
Fidimin (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	—	•
Sincro (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	Masnad	•
Zeid (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Man'aris (3) (+)	•	•	•	—	'Ubad	•
Edab'iy (1) (+)	Wish	•	•	—	Gabda	Gasaba
Beni Mazar (2) (+)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Golosna (3) (+)	•	Sikka	•	—	•	•
Shosha (1) (+)	•	Silah	•	—	•	•

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	handle grip	Beam
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Wish	Sikke	Gafaien	Ṭog	Gaṇḍa	Gaṇaba
Garf Serḥan (2) (+)	•	•	•	–	•	•
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	•	•	Dafaien	Dibel	Yadd	•
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	Ḍog	Gabḍa	•
El-'Eabi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Ṭog	Babba	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	Dabba	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	Gabḍa	•
Eṣṣaberiat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	Dibel	•	•
Ḥarragia (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	Wagh	•	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Wish	•	•	•	Magbaḍ	•
Kelh (3) (+)	Wigh	•	Ḥadd	•	•	•
Rameḍi South (1) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	•	•	•
Benhan (3) (+)	Wagh	•	Ḥadd	•	•	•
Baḥarif (3) (+)	Sikke	•	Rigil	•	Yadd	
Palestine :						
Southern area (2) (–) (+)	Arḍiya	Ḥaseem	Romb		Ḥamama	Koo'
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) (–) (+)	El-Layṭa	Sikka	Seluqina	—	Qarraṣa	Raqaba

(1) Ploughs observed by the author.
(2) Ploughs described by some students of the author (faculty of Arts, Ain-Shams Univ.).
(3) Ploughs described by H. A. Winkler pp. 153-158 (see references below).
(+) Double handle plough.
(=) Curved beam plough.
(+) One animal plough (usually garden plough). [241]
(++) Wheeled plough (usually used in sandy areas).
(+) I) Wheeled plough (usually for vegetables).
(= =) The first part of the beam, which is attached to the share is called Wasle, while the forked fore part of the beam is called Arish, and the whole is called Ous. see Winkler, H. A., p. 154.

Transcription :

ء همزه	b ب	ḥ ح	ḫ خ	Sh ش	ṣ ص		
ḍ ض	Ṭ ط	' ع	G غ	q ق			

[104]

This Sign – on any vowel means elongation of the vowel.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Fastner; base with beam	Pin	Pin supporter	Beam Extension	Fastner; beam with beam extension	cross peg of beam or beam extension
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (2)	Ṭô'	Balanga	—	—	—	Bantot
Genemia (2) (+)	•	•	—	—	—	Lantot
Busraṭ (3) (+)	Ṭog	•	—	—	—	Antot
Nub (3)	—	•	Shinhab	—	—	Bantot
Ibrahimia (1)	Gafiez	•	•	—	—	•
'Ezbet-Maher (1)	•	•	•	—	—	•
Bilbies (2)	Afiez	•	—	—	—	•
Bilbies (3)	Ṭog	•	Faṭs	—	—	•
Ibrahimia (1) (=)	—	•	—	Waṣla	Shamber	•
'Ezbet-Maher (1) (=)	—	•	—	•	•	•
Bilbies (2) (=)	—	•	—	•	•	•
Bilbies (3) ( )	—	•	—	•	—	•
Bilbies (2) (+)	—	•	—	—	—	—
Bilbies (2) (++)	—	•	—	—	—	Bantot
Central Delta :						
Bicala (2)	Ṭô'	•	—	—	—	Antot
Bicala (2) (±) I)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zefta (2)	Ṭô'	Balanga	—	—	—	Antot
Sa'ad Pasha (1) (=)	—	•	—	Waṣla	Shamber	•
Shony (2)	Ṭô'	•	—	—	—	•
Mishla (1)	•	•	—	Waṣla	Shamber	•
Kamshush (3)	•	•	—	—	—	•
Kamshush (3) (±)	Balanga	•	—	—	—	—
Western Delta :						
Sanhur (3)	Ṭog	•	—	—	—	•
Netma (1)	Ṭô'	•	—	—	—	•
Middle Egypt :						
Ṭamma (3) (+)	Ṭô'	Magrum	—	Waṣla	Shuḍab	—
'Ayaṭ (2) (+)	Bagrôm	Balanga	—	•	Shuḍab	Douar
Fidimin (3) (+)	Ṭô'	Bagrôm	—	Ṣaffiṭ	Ǵars	Ǵars
Sinero (2) (+)	Bagrôm or Iyl	•	—	Ṣaffit	•	Shaḍḍab

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Place of observation	Fastner; base with beam	Pin	Pin supporter	Beam Extension	Fastner; beam with beam extension	Cross peg of beam or beam extension
Zeid (2) (+)	Iyl	Bagrom	Masanid	Waglet-Etta'ab	Ta'ab	Shaddab
Man'aris (3) (+)	•	•	Masned	Saffit	Shaddab	• or wiri
Eglab'iy (1) (+)	Musmar	•	•	Heem	Abu-Elguron	Shaddab
Beni Mazar (2) (+)	Tog	Balanga	—	•	Elgureen	Shuddab
Gologna (3) (+)	Gil	Mesned	without a special name	•	Geren	Shidab
Shosha (1) (+)	Musmar	Bagrom	Masned	•	Abu-Elguron	Shaddab
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Gil	•	•	•	•	'Asfur
Garf Serhan (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	Gurrab	Badrum	•	Garada	Baruf	Weri
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	Moftah	•	Garage	Bazla	Weiar
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Garagi	Bazhi	Baraf
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	Miftah	•	Karagi	Gutta	Mindif
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	Kurage	Habur	•
Essabariat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harragia (2) (+)	'Ogb	Dabbos	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	•	'Amud	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Gurrab	•	Habur	•	•	•
Kelh (3) (+)	•	Dul	Mesned	•	•	•
Ramadi South (1) (+)	•	'Amud	•	•	•	•
Benban (3) (+)	•	•	•	—		•
Baharif (3) (+)	•	•	Gafir			Messala
Palestine :						
Southern area (2) ( )(±)	—	—	—			—
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) (—) (+)	—	—	—			—

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Rope connecting beam with yoke	Yoke	Outer peg of the yoke	Inner Peg of the yoke	Middle Peg of the yoke	Rope connecting yoke with animal
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (2)	Gêd	Naf	Gunafa	Soba'	Musmar	Ḥunnag
Genemia (2) (+)	•	•	Ounafa	•	•	Deshida
Busraṭ (3) (+)	'ôd	•	•	•	•	
Nub (3)	Ged	•	Deshida or gunafi	'Asfur	'Asfur	
Ibrahimia (1)	•	•	Gunafa	•	'Asfur Wastani	Dishida
'Ezbet-Maher (1)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bilbies (2)	'ed	•	Ounafa	•	•	Ḥabbl
Bilbies (3)	Ged	•	Ginafa	•	'Asfur	
Ibrahimia (1) ( )	•	•	Gunafa	•	'Asfur Wastani	Deshida
'Ezbet-Maher (1) (=)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bilbies (2) ( )	'ôd	•	Ounafa	•	'Asfur	Ḥabbl
Bilbies (3) (=)	Ged	•	Gunafa	•	•	—
Bilbies (2) (+)	'ed	•	Ounafa	—	—	Habbl
Bilbies (2) (++)	•	•	•	•	'Asfur	•
Central Delta :						
Bicala (2)	Ged	•	•	•	•	Deshida
Bicala (2) (±)	Salab	•	•	—	—	•
Zefta (2)	Ged	•	•	'Asfur	'Asfur	•
Sa'ad Pasha (1) (=)	•	•	Ḥunnag	•	'Asfur Wastani	•
Shony (2)	'ed	•	Maḥna'a	•	Bakara	•
Mishla (1)	Ged	•	Ḥunna'a	•	Ra'ff	Maḥna'a
Kâmshush (3)	'ad	•	Ounafa	•	'Asfur	
Kamshush (3) (±)	—	•	•	—	—	—
Western Delta :						
Sanhur (3)	'ad	•	Gunafi	'Asfur	'Asfur	—
Netma (1)	•	•	Ḥunna'a	•	•	Maḥna'a
Middle Egypt :						
Ṭemma (3) (+)	•	•	Ounafa	Ounaf	Musmar	—
'Ayaṭ (2) (+)	•	•	•	'Asfur	•	Maḥna'a

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Place of observation	Rope connecting beam with yoke	Yoke	Outer Peg of the yoke	Inner Peg of the yoke	Middle Peg of the yoke	Rope connecting yoke with animal
Fidimin (3) (+)	'ed	Danad	Ounafa	Dunaf	Musmar	—
Sincro (2) (+).	•	•	•	•	el-Maqsam	Mahna'a
Zeid (2) (+).....	•	•	•	•	•	•
Man'aris (3) (+).....	Wire	•	•	•	no name	-
Edlab'iy (1) (+)	•	Karab	Gunafa	Suba'	Suba'	Mahna'a
Beni Mazar (2) (+)	Ged	•	•	Habur	Habur	Gunafa
Golosna (3) (+)	•	•	•	Suba'	Suba'	—
Shosha (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	Gunafa
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+).	Wire	•	Gale	Musmar	Musmar	—
Garf Serhan (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	Mahna'a
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)...	•	•	•	—	•	Muhnaga
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+).	•	•	Gile	Gile	•	•
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	'Asfur	•	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+) ...	•	•	Gille	Za'fur	Za'fur	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ebassariat (1) (+).....	•	•	•	Sa'fur	Ta'fur	•
Kinan (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harragia (2)(+)	•	•	•	Zahfur	Zahfur	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	•	•	•	Ta'fur	Ta'fur	•
Nauasir (3) (+).....	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kelh (3) (+).....	Ura	•	Rikkbe	Za'fur	Za'fur	•
Ramadi South (1) (+)...	Hora	•	•	—		•
Benban (3) (+).....	•	•	•	—		•
Baharif (3) (+)	•	•	Musraga	—	—	•
Palestine :						
Southern area (2) (—)(+).	Salab	Nier	Shoha	Shoha	Musmar	Habbl
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) ( ) (+)	Habbl	—	—		—	Habbl

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE I]

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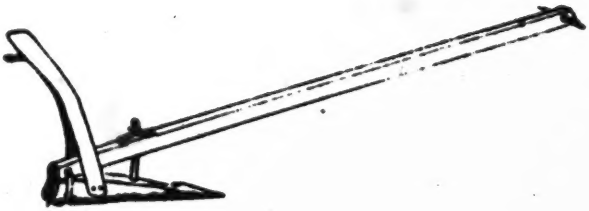

(a) — Type I. Split handle. — Straight beamed Plough.

(b) — Type II. Single handle. — Curved beamed Plough.

[END PLATE II]

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(a) — Type III. Single handle. — Straight beamed Plough.

(b) — Type IV. Right-angled double handle Plough.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE III]

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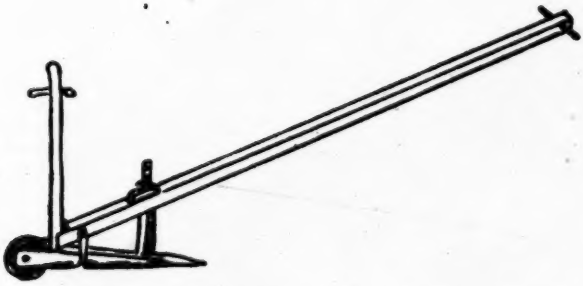
(a) — Type V. Obtuse angled double handle Plough.



(b) — Type VII. Single handle. — Straight beamed and wheeled Plough (Bilbies).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE IV]

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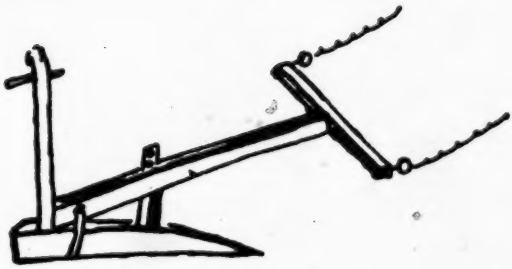
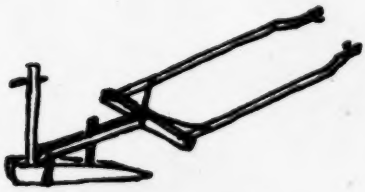


(a) Bilbies.

(b) Kamshush (after Winkler).



(c) After S. M. Behiery.

Type VI. Single handle. — Straight and short beamed Plough (Garden type).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE V]

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EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
I. DYNASTIC PERIOD

(a) — Old Kingdom (after Erman, fig. 203).

(b) — 11-12 dynasty 2100-1800 B. C. wood figure, British Museum (after Breasted, Plate 79).

(c) — New Kingdom (18th dynasty). (after Erman, fig. 203).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VI]

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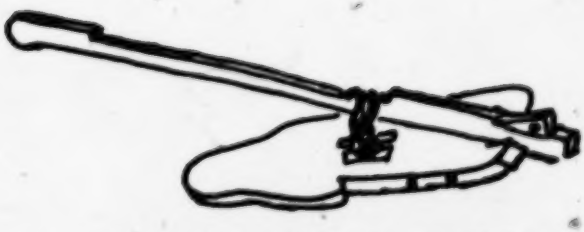
EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
II. GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

(a) — Harit Plough [Fayum], double handle. — Curved beamed Roman Period (origin Egyptian Museum, Cairo).



(b) — Darb Gerza Plough double handle. — Straight beamed Greco-Roman Period (origin Berlin Museum, drawn after Model in the Agriculture Museum, Cairo).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VII]

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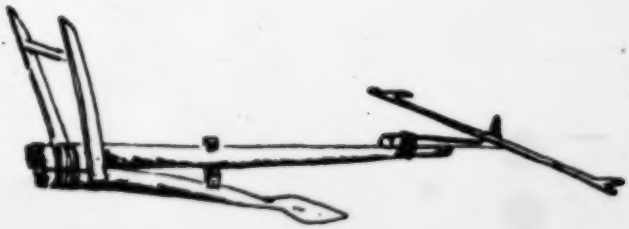
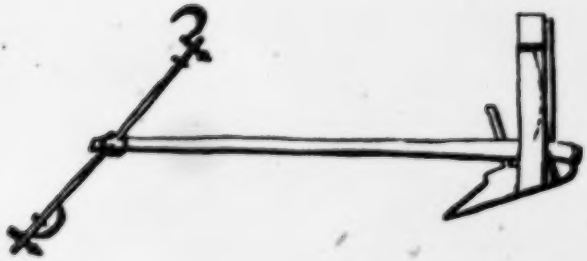
EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
III. MODERN TIMES



(a) — The Egyptian Plough after Norden (mid 18th. Century) Upper Egypt (See Norden, Pl. LVI, pp. 54-55).



(b) — The Egyptian Plough after Description de l'Egypte [late 18th. Century] (Planche IX, Tome II, Etat Moderne).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VIII]

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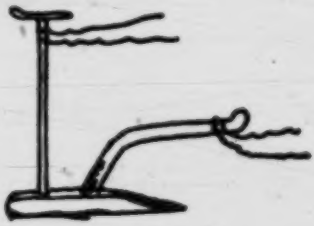
CURVED BEAMED PLOUGHS (MEDITERRANEAN REGION)

(a) — Southern Palestine.



(b) — Tripoli.

(c) — Tunisia (After Baumann, p. 31 e).

(d) — Valley Hadramut Southern Arabia (After Helfritz, Photo 37).

7: Riad MR13 Fellahin MR13

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/For information on types of Egyptian plows and their evolution see category 116, pp. 241-268, 272-277 and 8 end plates./

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE SONGS

OF AN

EGYPTIAN PEASANT

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED

INTO GERMAN BY

HEINRICH SCHAEFER

ENGLISH EDITION BY

FRANCES HART BREASTED

LEIPZIG
J. C. HINRICHS
1904

[Title Page]
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Upper Egypt

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Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-ʿItr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

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Modern Poetry

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Egyptian Dialect. Hymns and Specimens of Poetry

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1343543

000

DEDICATED TO MY

DEAR WIFE

[p. v]

H. S.

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000

He who looks at every feather,
Ne'er will get his bed together.

Wer auf jede Feder acht',
Nie das Bette fertig macht.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The little collection which I herewith publish, doubtless makes known for the first time, a considerable series of songs of the peasants of Upper Egypt; for, as far as I know, there has, hitherto, been printed here and there, only an occasional song, for the most part of no particular content. 114

Although I hope that my book may also furnish material scientifically available, yet this has not been the motive for its publication. It is not intended as a book for scholars. I trust its perusal may be a pleasure to all travelers on the Nile, and to those who may be preparing themselves for the journey thither, as well as to any others who, upon their return home, would gladly be again reminded of the country and the people. Moreover, it may, perhaps, help all such to learn somewhat better how our brown friends think and feel, than it is possible to do by the mere reading of descriptions. For here the people themselves speak, and in words which were not calculated for their effect upon Europeans. Indeed, I think many will be pleasantly surprised by these songs. Of course they are of unequal merit, but I 114 114 121

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114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣîr. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my inform-
115 ants was a Būṣîri (man of Abūṣîr), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa''āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa''āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhîm es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old
124 rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All
115 the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either
[104] not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus,
[194] I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasye near Beni-Suēf.

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once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

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114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, 533 plural: fellāḥîn), made up of hard work and few 1461 pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

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it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them. 533 [114]

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they 461 533 [186]

[1]) According to Maḥmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women. [887]

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

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461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
[121] all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

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its manifold cares, allowed me.[1] Moreover, I am entirely without previous training as an Arabist, since all that I know of the language, was learned during my two years' sojourn in Egypt, when the study of Arabic was merely an incidental matter. I am, therefore, greatly indebted to Professor Dr. A. Fischer, of Leipzig, for going to the trouble of looking through my "layman's-translations" and freeing them from a number of mistakes, both great and small. That the work, nevertheless, contains various mistakes, is due to the circumstances already mentioned, and we are both fully aware of them. What may be said of the songs from the standpoint of the Arabist, will be elsewhere stated by Professor Fischer[2], when he will also indicate where he does not agree with the translations and explanations which I have adopted. 114

I could almost wish that a good deal of fault may be found with my work, if it might prove true the German proverb: "Dass man der Dornen acht', das haben die Rosen gemacht." In Lane's classical book[3] we have a most excellent description of the life and customs of the inhabitants of Cairo. The treatment of the conditions in Upper Egypt is lim-

[1]) In No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, L. Borchardt gives a vivid description of a working-day.

[2]) For lesser contributions I am indebted to L. Borchardt as well as Professor Dr. Lippert.

[3]) An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. (London 1836; 1882; herein cited from the old edition.) [113]

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114 ited to a few pages, and yet it is just these which are vastly more important to us Egyptologists, for the history of culture. But the work of a layman's leisure hours can not produce a supplement to Lane.

Some young, efficient Arabist, with open eyes and a fondness for the land and inhabitants, and possessed of sufficient knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Coptic language, ought to bury himself for two or three years, in an Upper Egyptian village. I am convinced that this sacrifice would be richly repaid in regard to the Arabic language also. It can not be accomplished by mere visits during the season.[1]

Up to this time next to nothing has been done in this direction[2], and who knows when it may be too late?

It would please me most of all, if my book should prove an incentive for the production of a better one, which would form a companion-piece to G. Dalman's excellent "Palaestinischer Diwan" (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901).

Heinrich Schaefer.

Steglitz, June 13, 1902.

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[181] [1]) The Egyptians are much more unapproachable and reserved in many things than is apparent from slight contact.

[113] [2]) Klunzinger's splendid book: "Bilder aus Ober-Aegypten etc." (Stuttgart, 1877.) gives a great deal, but not all, by far, of the wealth of material.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In the preparation of the English edition of these songs, the translator has received from Professor Schaefer, a number of verbal remarks furnished by Dr. F. Kern; others from reviews by A. Nallino (Litterarisches Centralblatt); B. Meissner (Deutsche Litteraturzeitung 1904 p. 1493) and especially by K. Vollers (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft LVIII, p. 226), thus making possible many improvements upon the German edition. The author has also himself furnished numerous additional remarks and notes. The entire work of producing the English edition has been done under the most advantageous circumstances; constant consultation with the author, and frequent discussions of doubtful points have ensured much greater accuracy than would otherwise have been possible.

The English version of the songs is not merely a translation from the German; wherever necessary, the Arabic was consulted, and for this aid, besides the author, I am indebted to my husband, who also gave the translation a careful revision.

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114 The reader should note that all the vowels in
[194] the transliteration have the sounds of Italian or continental vowels.

[192] The word, fellāḥ, which has been translated: "peasant", means literally: plowman.

For the sake of preserving the play on words, so characteristic of the Arabic, it has sometimes been necessary to translate literally, where, in order to be perfectly intelligible, a foot-note was essential. (Numbers 34—35, "finished".)

Owing to the differences in our occidental, living arrangements, it has been difficult, in some instances, to preserve the comparisons which are more easily rendered in the German.

The task herewith completed, has given me unusual pleasure, since it has acquainted me with many things in the life of the people, which, during a winter in Egypt, entirely escaped me. I can only hope that the translation may render the same service to travelers in Egypt, as well as to all lovers of folk-lore.

Frances Hart Breasted.

Gross Lichterfelde, July 18, 1904.

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1.

Morning Hymn.

539x
[461]

This little hymn was sung very often by our boys, — always in the morning, during the first hours of work.

U-ṣabaḥna ʾaṣdīn Alla,
ʿala bābak, ya kerīm, yalla,
ʿala bāb min fatah abwābak.
Wa-la ḥaul wa-la ʾāwa illā-bak.

In the morning we turn to Allah.
At thy door (we stand), thou gracious one, Allah,
At the door of him, who hath opened thy doors of mercy.
And there is no might and no strength save in thee.

3. The Prophet Mohammed has opened to mortals the doors to Allah. [779]
4. A frequently used formula, founded on a Koran verse. [796]

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2.

Trust in Allah.

×399 *Ya ʿēni, wel-miʿēn Alla*
wes-Seiyide u-rigāl Alla;
we-ramēt el-ḥiml ʿalēk, yalla.

Thou, mine eye, Allah is the helper
And the Lady and the men of Allah;
And on thee have I cast the burden, O Allah!

[192] 1. "Mine eye" is a frequent term of affection, equivalent to "my darling". Here, perhaps, the father is speaking to the son.

2. The "Lady" is the lady Zēnab, the Prophet's grand-daughter, whose greatly esteemed mosque lies in south Cairo. [192] The "men of Allah" are the saints (shêkhs), whose graves lie scattered throughout the land.

3.

Exhortation to Prayer.

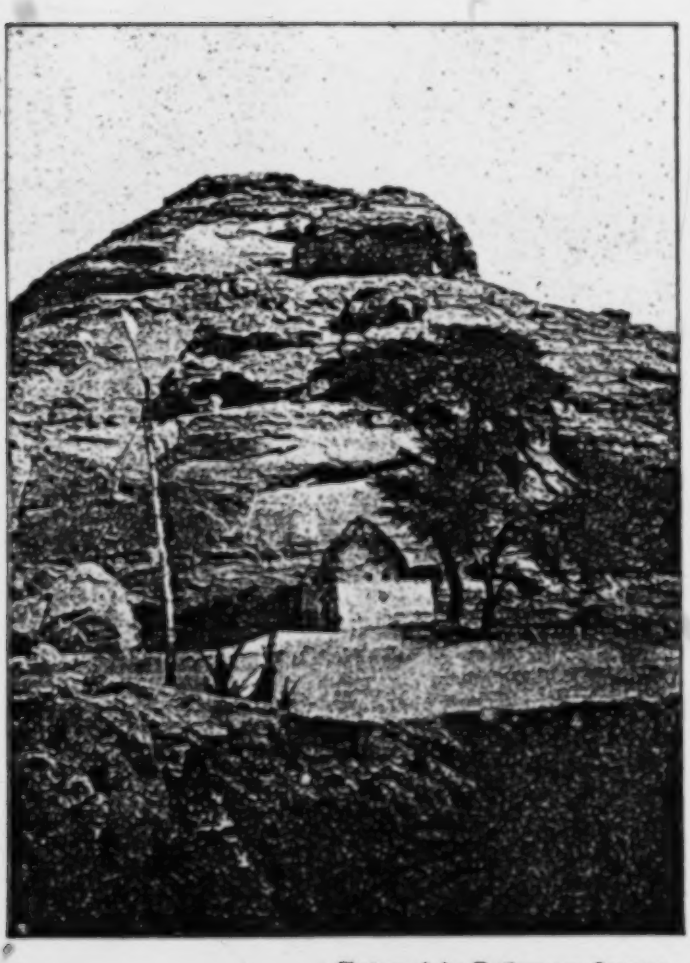
[182] *Ya ʾalbi, ṣalli wimdaḥ Moḥammed*
illi ṣalāto manaʿit guhannim.

Pray, my heart, and praise Moḥammed,
Whose prayer has put away hell.

1. From pious Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133
346
766



Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Grave of a Saint.
(at Ellesiye in Nubia.)

[P. 3]

4.

Sing ye to the Prophet!

539x
782

The children exhort each other, even when at work on the excavations in the desert, not to forget Moḥammed, the messenger of Allaḥ, the intercessor for mankind, but to praise him with songs, such as our numbers 5—7. (Maḥmûd called such a song "ṛuna nabawi"). Otherwise, neglect of this, brings a most terrible revenge upon the entire family.

The refrain "O Moḥammed" is sometimes used as a mere interjection, for the sake of meter; again it is a part of the sentence.

Ya-Mḥammed,
ya wallahi, ya-Mḥammed,
yabn-er-Rāma, ya-Mḥammed,
ya medallil bil-ṛamāme, ya-Mḥammed!
5 *Lāli lāli ya-Mḥammed*
fil-gabāli, ya-Mḥammed;
wil-lelētu ya-Mḥammed,
ruḥtu u-gētu, ya-Mḥammed;
welli ma ye'ūl ya-Mḥammed,
10 *yiṣbaḥ ma'tūl, ya-Mḥammed,*
fi dire-l-fūl, ya-Mḥammed,
hāwa we-ummo wimrāt 'ammo, ya-Mḥammed!

O Moḥammed,
By Allah, O Moḥammed,
Son of Rāma, O Moḥammed,
Who was shaded by the cloud, O Moḥammed!
5 Sing, sing: "O Moḥammed!"
In the desert! [— O Moḥammed].

[P.4 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed].
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[192] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afârit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullē ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gûrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[92] [776] [362] [72]

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

[241] [262]

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

5.

539x
782

Prayer to the Prophet.

Ya nabīne, ya sākin Ṭēbe,
u-ʿalēk, ya nabīne, u-ṣallēne.
Yōm el-ʾiyāme iš̌faʿ fīne,
wiš̌šaffaʿ, ya rasūl Alla,
5 *nuṣṣ el-layāli we-ḥakam Alla.*

O our Prophet, who dwellest in Ṭēbe,
For thee, O our Prophet, we entreat Allah's blessing.
At the Day of Resurrection speak for us,
And mediate for us, thou messenger of Allah,
5 At midnight — but Allah's will be done.

1. Ṭēbe is another name for the city of Medīna, in which the Prophet Moḥammed lies buried. [779]

2. That is: "we say: Allah bless Moḥammed and save him".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

6.

×539 782

Praise of the Prophet.

This song was a special favorite of our boys and was often sung:

"All nature, animate and inanimate, rendered its homage to the Prophet." Evidently Maḥmûd understood the song not solely as something that happened in time long past, when the Prophet still walked on earth. He wished the camel, mentioned in l. 5, to be understood as the one which carries the Maḥmal[1] each year from Cairo to Mecca and back. This interpretation certainly is false and artificial, but it indicates, that Maḥmûd thought not only of the distant past: each nod [824] of the wind-bowed palms and the opening of every rosebud is, even to this day, a greeting for the Prophet.

Ya ʿēni, weṣ-ṣala ʿan-nabi,
we-ṣalāt en-nabi maksabi.
Mitwaḥḥid rabbak, ya ṣabi.
Wen-naḫle sagadit lin-nabi,
5 *wel-gamal ḥām lin-nabi,*
wil-ḥagar lān lin-nabi,
wil-ward fattaḥ lin-nabi,
wel-ḥaṣa sabbaḥ le-rabbo:
kullo kerāme lin-nabi.

Thou, mine eye, Allah's blessing be upon the Prophet!
And the prayer of the Prophet shall be my gain.
Thy Lord is an only one — O boy.
The palm-tree bowed before the Prophet,
5 And the camel ran about searching for the Prophet,

[1]) Regarding Maḥmal see Lane II p. 182.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

And the stone was soft for the Prophet, 539
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet, 782
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 3.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 5. [776]

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed dāḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardē ḍallil ʿalê.
Be-ṭarfē šālo el-ʾaṣab,
farado we-ṣalla ʿalê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me".

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban. [291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

×539
776
796
[769]

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 3—5 describe
[211] the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bab in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ʿatabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bab mezauwaʾ, ya Seiyid!*
Win ʿišt ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
wa'id ʾanadîlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

1. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 1.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

9. 539[k] 776

A song of Egyptian origin, containing in part the same verses as our own, was communicated to Dalman (Palaestinischer Diwan, p. 141) in Sidon, by a sailor. Of the first verse he remarks: The flag-staff with the crescent, which is mounted over the tomb, is supposed to sway, as a sign that the saint promises to grant the request made to him. [787]

Hizz el-hilāl, ya Seiyid,
yabu bēra' nabawi!
Win 'išt ana, ya Seiyid,
lazūrak sanawi.

Shake the crescent, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the Prophet's flag!
And if I live, O Seiyid,
I shall visit thee yearly.

2. The flag of the Prophet is green, as are the turbans and sometimes even the clothes, of his descendants in Egypt (the Sherifs). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

10.

The Well Zemzem.

x539
778
823

The well Zemzem is the miraculous well in the Mosque of Mekka. Pilgrims drink from it and are accustomed to carry vials of its water home with them. In a very similar song of Dalman's (P. 8; from Ḥawāra in Aglûn in Palestine) the Zemzem well is addressed, but it means a girl. Perhaps our song is also to be thus understood.

Ya bīrî Zemzem, salabik selāsil,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lim-mesāfir.
Ya bīrî Zemzem salabik ḥarīr,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lil-ʿalīl.

Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like chains,
And to drink from thee is medicine for the traveler.
Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like silk,
[757] And to drink from thee is medecine for the sick.

1. 3. This is a draught-well. Its ropes are as strong as chains and as soft as silk.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

11.

The Straggler.

539x
788

The pilgrimage to Mecca, which every pious Moslem is bound to make at least once in his life, is a long one; it goes by land and by sea, and for people unaccustomed to travel, it is attended with many cares and dangers. For this reason the pilgrims usually combine into caravans of some size. The little song pictures the perplexity of a straggler, who has missed connection with his caravan and is now totally at a loss.

[484]

Lines 1—2 are the words of another, who calls to the pilgrim: "Enough for to-day, for thou canst not possibly reach thy goal to-day!" Lines 3—7 are spoken by the pilgrim.

Sams el-'aṣāri ṛarabit,
yalli biladak bu'ad!
Wana biladi Mikketi!
u-min ēn arūḥ?
5 *u-min ēn âgi?*
u-min ēn asaiyir markabi
u-min ēn azūrak, ya nabi?

"The afternoon sun has gone down,
Thou, whose country is afar off!" —
"O, the land I would go to is Mecca!
How shall I go?
5 How shall I reach my goal?
And how shall I sail my ship?
How shall I visit thee, O Prophet?"

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

12.

×539

The Transitoriness of Earthly Riches.

To a once-rich but now impoverished beauty. God alone is eternal; earthly glory passes away.

Alla wed-dāim Alla,
Alla we-la dāim ṛēro.
Bēḍa u-fēn 'abīdik?
Mātu wel-mulkē lalla!

Allah, and the Eternal One is Allah,
Allah, and there is nothing eternal beside him.
Thou white maiden, where are thy black slaves?
They are dead, and the kingdom is Allah's!

13.

The Sigh of the Debtor.

[776] Abul'éle el-Ḥosēni is the saint, whose tomb lies in Būlā' (Bulak), the suburb of Cairo.

Yabu-l-'éle, ya Ḥosēni,
Yabu-l-'éle, tūfi dēni!

O Abul'éle, O Ḥosēni,
O Abul'éle, pay my debts!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their [858] parents, but are also their dearest treasures.

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫāi, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arnē fūl aḫḍar.
Leḥne 'izāze,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
niṭḥaffē fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a [291] pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment.

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, [262] note on l. 11.

3. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but [301] he is fond of having it seen.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

15.

×539
825

The Baby Gazelle.

The gazelle is for the Arab, the prototype of tenderness and beauty. Its pasture is the stony desert ground. Who is not reminded of:

"Shoe the horse and shoe the mare,
But let the little colt go bare!"

Gidy-il-ṛazal, ya aulād,
sāriḥ wara-mmato,
sāriḥ bala markūb,
ḥefyit rigalāto.

The baby gazelle, my children,
Goes behind its mother, to the pasture;
It goes to the pasture without any shoes,
With little feet bare.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Rain-Songs.

539x
821

16.

In spite of the overflowing of the Nile, rain is regarded by the Egyptian peasant, as a most desirable aid; and especially so, of course, in bad years.

Ya rabbĕ tišti,
we-billĕ bišti;
wel-'amḥ yirḫaṣ
we-amla kirši.

O Lord, let it rain,
Wet my little dress!
So that corn will be cheaper,
And I can fill my belly!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

17.

×539 821 [551] "Rain, pour it out", that is, all the water which you can give, so that all the vessels in the house will overflow, even to the coffee-cups. Both personal names ('Abdulle and 'Abd-el-'âl) are taken, of course, only to rhyme with the names of the vessels. It is certainly mere accident, that the name 'Abdalla appears also in a similar rain-song of Dalman's (P. 175; from Aleppo).

Ya naṭaret 'Abdulle,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-'ulle.
Ya naṭaret 'Abd-el-'âl,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-fingāl.

O Rain of 'Abdulle,
Pour it out and fill the water-bottle!
O Rain of 'Abd-el-'āl,
Pour it out and fill the cup.

2. 'ulle are the water-bottles, of porous, unglazed clay, in [415] which the drinking-water is kept fresh.

4. Fingāl (fingān) are the little coffee-cups without handles, which are placed in little stands (zarf) resembling egg-cups.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

18.

539x
854

One of the songs with which the mothers quiet the little ones, and in which one often seeks in vain for the connection. This song, with a few variations, was heard by Goldziher in Cairo in 1873. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft 33, p. 612.)

Ya naṭara, ṣubbīha,
ḥalli-l-wizz yeʿūm fīha.
Bint uḫti ʾarʿa ʾarʿa,
ḥadha-d-dīb u-rāḥ yirʿa,
5 *ʾarʾaša taḥt et-tirʿa.*

O Rain, pour it out!
Let the geese go swimming in it!
My little niece is scab-headed, scab-headed, [164]
The wolf has caught her and gone to eating,
5 He has gnawed her to pieces in the canal.

1. Compare No. 17, l. 2.
2. Let it rain hard enough to form puddles, in which geese can swim.
3. Owing to the filth in which the country children grow up, scabby heads are not rare. [515]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

19.

Song to a sun-shower.

'Ēb 'alēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband 'Ali, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

'Ali, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast; for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl 'Ali u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-'aginha 'uddāmha.

5 *Rāḥet tekubbē-trabha* 539x
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha. 527
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd 821
yegīb-līha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [20]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyûṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyûṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. [114] d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communi- [171] cation of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq (Za'āzi').

Daḫaltê bēt Alla,
la'it ḥamām aḫḍar;
bila"amû sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi zurto!*

[231] I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

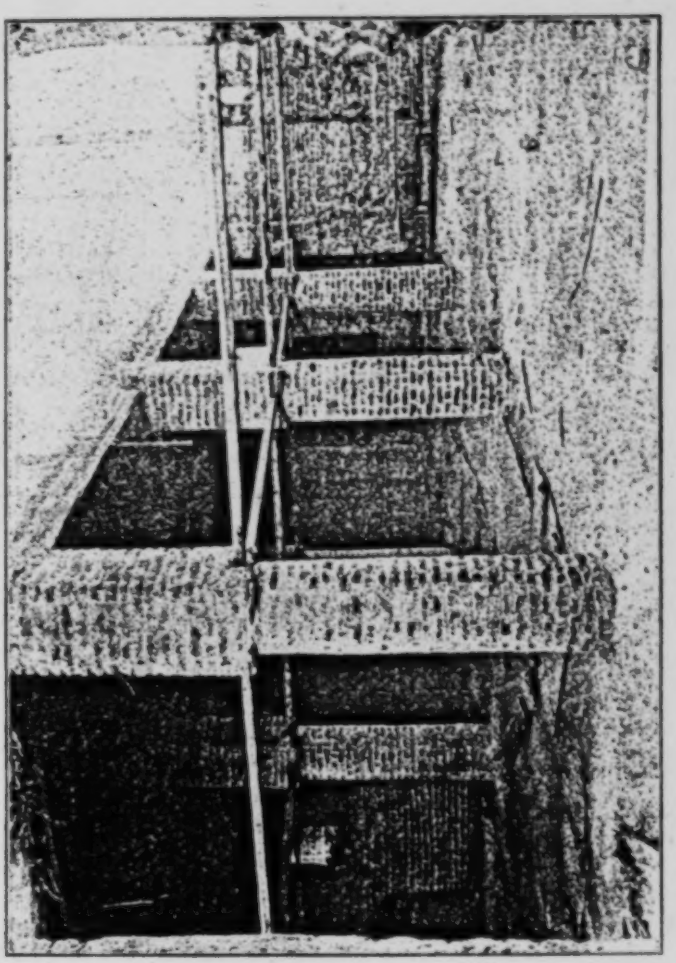
1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, [788] in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 821.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. [771] "It", that is, the house of Allah.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

346
333



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Interior of a Village Mosque.
Ehnasye in Middle Egypt.

22.

Swing-Song.

539^
527
857

This song is said to be sung by girls, as they swing at the "great feast". They are teasing friends who are standing near.

The "great feast" ('id el-kebîr) also designated by the Turkish name Korbân Beirâm, is celebrated about two months and a half after the more important "little feast", which ends the holy fast-month Ramaḍân. At the time of the "great feast", even the poorest must have a piece of meat, for it is celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. [196]

Like all feasts, the "great feast" is celebrated with much noise and merriment. Swings are rarely lacking at the place of the feast.

Ya ḫai, rīḥet hudāmak
zēi kaḥk el-'īd,
ma'gūm-bi-šēbe u-kafūra
u-samnē gedīd.

Brother, the odor of thy garments
Is like feast-cakes,
Kneaded with wormwood and camphor
And fresh fat.

3. Such strange spices as wormwood and camphor are actually baked in these sweet feast-cakes, which are general favorites (compare No. 20. l. 9). Camphor is put, for instance, into coffee. [263]

[P 24 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

23.

Enough of Play!

×539 861 The mothers have difficulty every evening, in inducing the children, who play in the streets until late in the evening, to come home to supper.

A child who is sent out to get the others, speaks:

Ya la'ibin kull el-lēle,
it'aššu u-ta'alu!
Win mā gētâš il-lēle,
laḥaddifkum bi-'ul'ēle,
5 *simm el-fār*
mi' el-'aṭṭār.
[Iḥbaṭ ya ṭar
kull el-lēle!]

You, who play all night,
Come and have your supper!
And if you do not come this evening,
I shall throw a clod at you!
5 Mouse-poison
Is (to be had) at the grocer's!
[534] [Beat, tambourine,
The whole night through].

[805] 1. Night begins at sunset. Lēle, "night", often designates, therefore, our evening.
5. 6 I might poison you!
7. 8 May have been taken from some other song.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾāʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

539 461 [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballāṣ aḥḍar u-melān!
Ya giḏʿān, iḏʿu rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

[192] 1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē higgi, balāš dalāʿa;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafāʿa.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

172
482
415

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

At the Work of Excavation.

The Boys with their Rubbish-Baskets. (Excavations at Abuṣîr.)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

b) Before the Noonday Recess.

27.

539x
461

Compare the remark on No. 33.

Bussê fis-sâ'a,
ya-l-efendi,
til'ana kullîna gauwâ'a!

Look at thy watch,
O efendi,
Thou findest us utterly starved.

2. Compare No. 24, note on l. 1.

28.

Ya sîdi, raddi katakîtak
lêmûtu wa-la haddê yerîtak.

O sir, let thy chicklets eat their dinner,
Or they will die and none will help thee further!

1. The chicklets are, of course, the workers themselves.

[P 30 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

29.

×539 461 *Ṛaddāna lalla, yalli warāna!*
Yib'a-lkum agr we-ṣawab 'and Alla, yalli warāna!

For Allah's sake, let us eat dinner, ye, who stand behind us!
Reward and recompense ye shall receive from Allah, ye, who stand behind us!

1. "Stand behind us": as overseers and drivers.

30.

Ya'lla, ṛaddi, wis-sams indārit
wil-maṣārin fi-bṭunna-ḥtārit.

Up, let us eat dinner! The sun has turned itself about
And the entrails in our bellies are all stirred up.

1. The sun has risen to the zenith.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539x
461
[264]
[262]

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes.

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'ba-l-'afa-lla!
rauwah, ya mirsāl, 'dwadak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

---

d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Mahmûd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min rādi
wi-t'āl: el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

33.

×539 805 461 [422] [405]

For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli ma'akum is-sa'ât,
ādi mi'âd 'afa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 461

To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self, in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, 'afa-lla, nāna!
we-bfilna weš-šuṛl 'ammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

461
291

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Excavating for papyrus.
Ehnasya in Middle-Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

35.

'afa-lla 'ād 539x
we-bṭilna we-fāt el-mi'ād! 461

Working-time is over, again,
We are "finished" and time is up!

2. Compare No. 34, note on l. 2.

36.

"It will be dark before we reach home, so call a halt!" 539x 821
Almost all peasants who are away from the village at nightfall, feel very uncomfortable, see No. 4, Note on l. 8. Our boy, Abu Bekr (see preface, p. VIII), once wrote me: Ellēl ṛūl, we-kull en-nās teḫāf minno: "The night is a witch and everybody is afraid of her".

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-msauwaḥna,
ya dōb es-sams terauwaḥna.

O Sir, thou who hast brought us (hither),
The sun will hardly bring us (home)!

1. That is to say: by whose command we have come to work.

37.

Compare the remark on No. 36.

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-mdādīna,
ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

O Sir, thou who treatest us kindly,
The sun will scarcely guide us (home)!

1. "Treatest .. kindly": as a nurse (dāda) would.

[P. 36 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

38.

×539
466

El-'afu, ya bē, yafendina,
win kunna 'ibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraḍḍīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [570] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, [593] the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 3. Another said: rabbīna, raḍḍīna.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

A girl, named Dinâre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shêkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbîye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

Dinâre 'alet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warāḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarrag 'al-bagūr.

Dinâre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

40. 41.

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

40.

×539 304 852

The father hurries home to the festivity.

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[304] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābiš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adūit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands rāqide instead of rāide.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

501
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Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Ferry-boat in Upper-Egypt.
At Ijagg Qandil.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

42.

The Inventor of the Shādûf.

539x
406
312
[174]

Shādûf is the modern name for a very ancient contrivance for raising water from the river to the higher level of the fields. There is evidence of its existence in Egypt as early as 1500 B. C. It resembles our well-sweep. Tied to the longer end of the lever by a rope, usually of plaited palm-fibre, is a leather pail, while the shorter end is weighted by a large stone or a lump of dry, Nile mud. The pail is filled in the river by the laborer and then emptied into a trench in the field above. (Compare the illustration.) If the banks are high, two or more shādûfs are employed, ranged in tiers, one above the other.

Of course the name of the inventor, Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi is mere invention; just as names are frequently inserted at pleasure, in such songs.

Šawādif
we-ḥbalha lif
wedlauha-glūd ma'zē gudādī.
We-aṣlo mā ṭalla' eš-šawādif
el-marḥūm Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

Shādûfs,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails of goat-skins.
And it was in ancient times, that shādûfs were invented
By the blessed Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi

[P. 42 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

43.

Hard Labor.

x599
461
312

Work at the shādûf (see No. 42) at which the laborer stands up to the waist in water, unceasingly drawing the pail at the end of the lever up and down, is considered one of the hardest of tasks. The songs which they sing while thus employed, of which numbers 42—46 are examples, are usually very melancholy, both in words and melody.

Ḥakamtē, ya bēn, bi-šan'i?
baḥbaḥ el-ḫaiye!
La ummē tibki
wa-la 'amme
5 *wa-la ḫaiye.*

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps (for me),
No aunt,
5 No sister.

[776]

1. "Strangling", namely: from the hard labor. According to Maḥmûd, bēn is a designation for God.

3—5. I, poor fellow, have so little any way, and no one on earth to love me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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291

A Shādûf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Grievous Parting.

330

44.

Ya sāyi' ir-ragb,
ṭāṭi-li ri'ab en-nā',
lamma awadda' muḥebbīni
wa'awid! — sā'!
5 *Walla, el-furā' ṣa'b!*
Ya ḥādi el-maṭāye, sā'!
Ṭekān 'al-alla!

Thou driver of the caravan,
Bend down the camels' necks for me,
That I may take leave of my loved ones,
Again and again! — Drive on!
5 By Allah the parting is hard!
There! thou driver of the camels, now drive on,
And Allah be with thee!

2. The camel usually carries its head very high, and in order to make the animal lie down, the driver pulls its head down by the bridle. [492]

[P. 46 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

45.

×539 As in the preceding song, the person addressed, is the caravan-driver.

Istanne telât daragât,
lamma awadda' rufa'âti
wa'ul-luhum:
'azzam Allah agrukum fîye!

Wait three degrees,
That I may take leave of my companions
And say to them:
[576] "May Allah bless you richly for all that ye have done for me!"

[405] [805] 1. Three degrees on the primitive sun-dial, which is made by thrusting a stick into the ground. According to it, the periods of work at the shâdûf are regulated.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

46.

Ṣubiḥ mesāfir, gā ḥabībi yewaddā'ni, 539*
bīki u-ball el-maḥārim. 'ultê-lo: lē ya'ni? 576
'al-li: u''ud ḥadāye telāt sa'āt tesallīni.
Walla, furā' el-ḥabaib ṣa'b, ya rabbi!

In the morning, as I was starting on a journey, my beloved came to take leave of me.
Her handkerchiefs were drenched with tears. I said to her: "Wherefore?"
She said: "O stay with me three hours, that thou mayest comfort me!"
Truly, the parting of lovers is grievous, O my Lord!

1. "Three", is used in such songs elsewhere also, as a round number; compare No. 45. [201]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

47.

Sympathy.

In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarim (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri mal ʿal-faṣʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilad ḥaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwati,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demāʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Mahmûds.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Calls of the Radish-Vender.

534*
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḥdar". (F. Kern.)

Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
5 *nuṣṣ el-balad tišhad-li,*
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
5 Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

49.

Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar!
Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!
LA'etni gamīle betitmaḫṭar,
we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri
5 *we-nādét, ma ḥaddē gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
5 [And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmūd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According to Maḥmūd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

443
351
516
137

Photograph by L. Burchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Gizeh.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

50.

Good Company.

539
576

Words of gratitude to parting visitors.

Lēla sa'īde!
bu-ru'yākum ḥuṣāli rāḥ.
U-kān me'i rēz,
sā'et šāfkum 'ām rāḥ.

Good night!
At sight of you, my trouble vanished.
Vexation lodged with me,
But when it saw you, it rose and left.

[P 56 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

51.

Ingratitude.

×539
681

Eṣ-ṣāḥib illi baʿazz el-ʾāt rabbēnâ,
minno gara ʿēb. Kābirna u-barrēnâ.
Kuturet ʿiyābo,
u-kull en-nās diryā-bo.
5 *ʾabbaḥ, rikibna maṭāyâna, u-ḥallēnâ.*

By the friend whom we brought up with the best of food,
By him evil was done. We were proud and did not punish him;
But his evil deeds increased,
And everybody heard of it.
5 He became insolent, so we mounted our camels and left him.

1. We relinquished the field of combat to him, rather than degrade ourselves by disputing with him.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [465]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-wārd ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʾaš ʿalē dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukūb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled here!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 7 and No. 7, l. 2.

3. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

53.

To Vain Beauties.

x 539
302

Why wish to touch up natural beauty by artificial means?

El-'ēn sōda min Alla,
wil-kohl lahir lē?
wil-ḫadd aḥmar min Alla,
wil-ḥosn-Yūsif lē?

The eye is black from Allah,
Wherefore then the eye-paint?
And the cheek is red from Allah,
Wherefore then Joseph's-beauty"?

2. Their black, shining eyes are the pride of the Egyptian women. Eye-paint (kohl) is the well-known, black coloring matter, which is used to day, as in ancient Egypt, to blacken the edges of the eyelids. The peasant-women often disagreeably overdo it.

4. "Joseph's-beauty" is the name of a red cosmetic (compare Klunzinger p. 184). Joseph is often mentioned as an ideal of beauty.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

54.

Mecca and Egypt.

539x
186

Banter on the desolate landscape of the holy place, compared with home, the beautiful, fruitful valley of the Nile.

Ya ulād Mikke, iš ḥal wādikum?
Wādine aḥsan min wādikum,
lūla-n-nabi ma kunna negīkum!

Ye sons of Mecca, how is your valley?
Our valley is more beautiful than your valley.
Were it not for the Prophet's sake, we should not
have come to you.

The first two verses, referring however to Damiette instead of Mecca, are to be found in a song in J. H. Churi's Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853 p. 317 (reprinted by Buecher in Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 434).

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55.

Arrogance.

×539 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with
576 me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ruzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Mohammed 'Ali exterminated. For Mahmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

[114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebī' er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ruzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ruzz (Mamaluke).

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56.

Self Importance.

Addressed to a wretched, dirty fellow who is something of a braggart. He looks like a smutty, black baking-tin, but acts as if he were of great importance.

Alla ʿaṣ-ṣag el-hindi,
fellāh we-ʿāmilē gindi!

Allah! look at the fine baking-tin!
Only a peasant and would play the soldier!

1. Literally: "Indian baking-tin" The adjective "(East) Indian" is used frequently with stuffs as an equivalent for "excellent".

2. One must not have in mind the tame, modern Egyptian military, but rather the Turkish soldiers of former times. Compare No. 55.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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57.

Rallying One's Self.

539 The payment of a certain sum to the wife, which shall remain her personal property, is one of the indispensable things pertaining to a legal marriage (compare the expression in No. 71, l. 1). The amount of the sum depends, naturally, upon the position and the charms of the bride. The lowest legally allowed sum, is about a dollar and a quarter (five shillings).

A pretty example of a poor peasant poking fun at himself. The dowry which he is able to command is no more than the price of a skull-cap, namely: seven and a half cents (four pence). [435]

Yabu libde, ya fellāḥ, yāne!
wana biddi aḫod Behāne
waddīha nuṣṣ el-'abḍīye,
wel-ba'i agib bo ṭa'iye.

O I with the felt cap, I, the peasant!
I wish to marry Behāne!
And I will give her the half of my wages,
And with the rest I will buy me a skull-cap.

291 1. Libde is the thick, closely fitting, felt cap, which the poor peasants wear. Usually it is of coarse, brown felt. Abu-libde, "father (that is: wearer) of the libde" is a frequent term of derision for a peasant.

3. Another said: nuṣṣ ed-damkīye.

4. Ṭā'iye is the white, knitted or crocheted, likewise closely fitting, little cap, which the men wear underneath the felt-cap.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

58.

Lamentations of a Builder.

539
343

A builder, having undertaken to build a pretentious bath, sits before the unsuccessful edifice and ridicules his work and himself.

Ḥammām ya-skanderāni,
ḥammām, šuṛlak barrāni!
ḥammām, wan-illi banēto,
ḥammām, u-ma ḥaddê ṛēri.

Thou Alexandrian bath!
O bath, how wretchedly thou art made!
O bath, and it was made by me,
O bath, and nobody but myself!

2. According to Maḥmûd, barrāni, "from abroad", is used here in the same sense as when applied to money, meaning "false" or "under value". Once, wishing to tell one of our men that the small coin of Egypt is coined in Berlin, I began thus: "All your Egyptian money is from abroad (barrāni)". He took fright and interrupted me with the words: "No, thou jokest, it is full value". [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

50.

539

Good Reason for Pride!

Dīnâre libiset mandīl
u-mkallafâ sittīn.
Ya 'āši', ya meskīn,
ṭarraḥūk 'al-ḫašab!

Dināre has put on a head-kerchief,
Which has cost her all of sixty (faḍḍa).
Now, poor lover,
Have thyself buried!

1. Dināre is a girl's name.

4. Literally: Mayest thou be stretched upon the wood (the bier). The girl is so proud of her cheap finery. Sixty (faḍḍa) are about one and a half piastres, equalling seven and a half cents.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs". 539x 563 186 [221] [231]

Ma 'ultê-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until later. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems. [812]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

61.

A Mother's Solicitude.

*539
[361]
[491]

In Middle and Lower Egypt, the villages are connected with one another by earthen dikes, which, during the time of the inundation, form the only communicating roads.

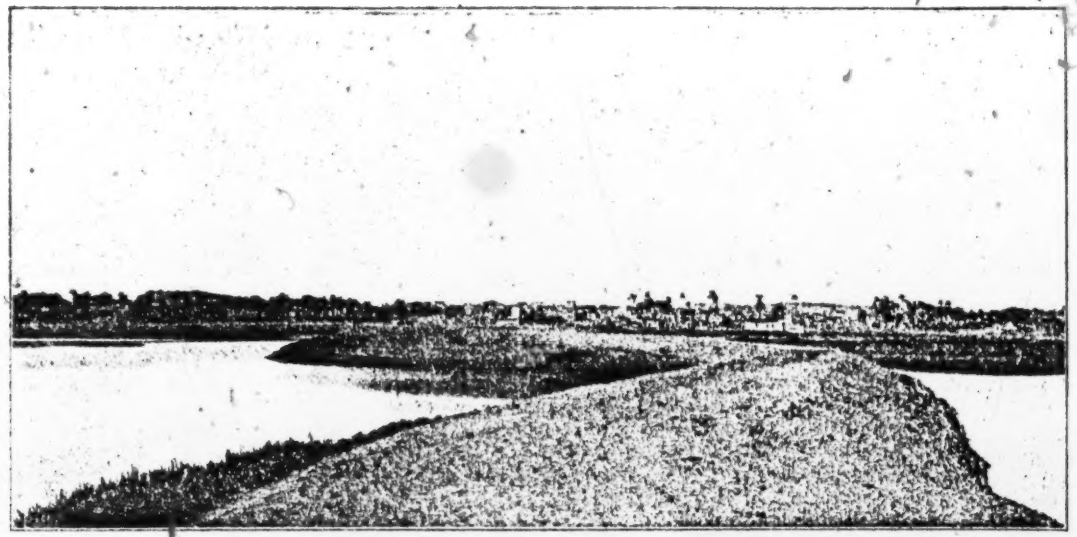
[625] The police are always at hand to imprison people. At roll-call, often, one or another of our workmen was announced as maḥbûs or "imprisoned".

Mā-lik betigri 'al-ǵusūr u-ḫēfe?
bagri 'ala waladi ḫadû eṭ-ṭēfe.

Why dost thou run so anxiously about on the dikes?
I seek my son, whom the patrol has caught!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

312
491
361



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

The dike which leads from Beni-Suēf to the town of Ehnasye.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbūḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the adventures of renowned Arab heroes. [173]

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbūḥ, ya 'Abbūḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbūḥ,
wummo warâ bitnūḥ,
wit'ūl: ya waladi,
5 *ya lābis ez-zaradî,*
sikkinetak ḫūṣa
fil-arḍê marṣūṣa,
ma raṣṣêhāš illāni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
5 O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: ... madfûse, ma raṣṣêhâš illâni, hence I translate: "bury".

[P 68 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

63.

Good Wishes.

×539 858 A little girl is addressed, who, according to Maḥmûd, is still so small, that she is compared with "goslings which are still green (aḫḍar)". Compare No. 64. Fortune shall so favor the little one, that she shall some day eat with a golden spoon from a silver dish.

Alla yeʿēnik, ya uzēzet Ragab;
wiṭ-ṭištê faḍḍa, wil-maʿāliʿ dahab.

Allah help thee, O Ragab's gosling!
[415] May thy dish be of silver, the spoons of gold!

[551] 1. According to Maḥmûd, Ragab is the name of the child's father.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

64.

Dreams of the Future.

539x
304
858

For explanation of the manner of address compare with the preceding song. Here prosperity is wished the little one, and a fine tatooing — the pride of a pretty girl — is promised her. Girls are usually tatooed at the age of five or six.

In the country almost all the women are tatooed; most frequently on the front part of the chin and on the lip, but also on the forehead, breast, backs of the hands and on the feet. The designs are pricked in with needles and blue or green coloring matter rubbed in. Compare Nos. 114 and 126.

Alla yçʿēnik, ya uzēz el-Yaman!
win ʾamet el-wizze we-ʾamet saʿdīha,
ladu" lil-wizze ʿala kaʿbīha.

Allah help thee, gosling of Yemen!
And when the goose has grown up and her fortune has grown too,
Then I will tatoo the goose upon her wrists and ankles.

1. Yemen = Arabia Felix, Araby the Blest.

2. Upon Mahmûd's explanation of ʾamet saʿdīha I was strongly reminded of: "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men". Added to this were riches of course.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

65.

The Fairy-Tale Prince.

This is probably a nursery-rhyme, in which we must not look for much connection. 'Allâm is the name of a king in the romances of famous Arab heroes.

Da nabīna ṣalla u-ṣām,
u-banā-lo fil-ganne ma'ām.
Serīye bint el-'Allām
we-ḫaṭabha ibn es-sulṭān.

Our Prophet has prayed and fasted
And has built a place for himself in Paradise.
Serīye is the daughter of 'Allām
And the Sultan's son has sought her in marriage.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

66.

A Connoisseur's Judgment.

539x
53

A sailor's song about the girls of three villages in Middle Egypt.

El-mulāḥ fiṭ-Ṭarfāye,
wir-radi fil-Kufūr.
tiṭ'agbum bil-'aṣāyib,
ya banāt el-Mēmūn.

The pretty ones live in Ṭarfāye
And the ugly ones in el-Kufūr.
Ye wear your head-kerchiefs so daintily,
Ye maidens of el-Mēmūn.

1. eṭ-Ṭarfāye: a place on the west shore of the Nile, a little south of el-Bedreshēn, which place is known to all visitors of Saqqāra.

2. el-Kufūr, literally: "the villages". According to Maḥmūd, these mean seven places situated very near together, on the west shore, south of Ṭarfāye, but his idea of them seemed very vague.

4. el-Mēmūn: a place, about seven miles south of el-Wasṭa, the station from which the railroad branches off to the Fayūm.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539

67.

A Stately Appearance.

Fāyit ʿalēye fārid es-samsīye
we-zaḥʾit ḥuṣāno dauwarit ʿamalīye.

He passed by me with sun-shade raised
And the neigh of his horse sought deeds.

68.

Her Lover's Tent.

The maiden sees her distinguished lover ascend to his showy tent. Compared to the beautiful picture at the beginning, the jingling rhyme of the Arabic at the end is in unfavorable contrast.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri māl u-māl
u-ḥabak ʿala-ṣ-ṣiwān ṣiwāno,
ṣiwānak il-ʿāli,
illi šarral bāli.
5 *Bāli, maʿak bāli,*
ya ṭāliʿ il-ʿāli!
sikkīnetak faḍḍa, ʿal-farše bitlāli.

The afternoon shadow has bent lower and lower
And over the tent has woven its tent,
Over thy lofty tent,
Which occupies my thoughts.
5 My thoughts, my thoughts are with thee,
Thou who ascendest to thy lofty (tent)!
Thy sword is of silver and shines on the divan.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

539x
861

Bil-amān, ya-lummē,
wa-la tuḍrub aiye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana-smi Lēle?
5 *Rumman ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭarah eg-genēne.
Ana ma'āk 'and el-'aḍi
fi-hāza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe, [826]
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun. [192] [551]

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'āḍi (Qâdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage. [693]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

70.

Pangs of Spring.

×539 Dialogue between a girl, named Nefīse (ll. 3–4), and her lover (ll. 1–2).

Rummān ig-genāin yaḥḍar
u-rummānik, ya Nefīse, ṭāb.
U-Nefīse, rāshe betūgaḥḥa;
fi-ʿurḍak tiktib-li ḥegāb.

"The pomegranates of the garden are green,
And thy pomegranates, Nefīse, are ripe."
"And Nefīse's head aches;
Have pity on me, write me an amulet."

2. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.
3. Of course from pangs of love.
4. Such amulets usually consist of a little piece of paper, [789] bearing Koran verses, folded and sewed into a little leather bag. Almost everybody wears one or more such amulets.

Here the "write me an amulet" is, of course, only a circumlocution.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

71.

Worldly Wise Advice.

539x
581
834

Yabu-l-bint el-bāliṛ biḥha,
'ablē ṣalāḥ el-bint mēḍi'.
Yabūha, mā-t'ulšē 'alēha: di ḥurra;
lamma-tšāf eg-giḍ'ān barra,
5 *ti'mil zē el-mohra lamma-tšī'.*

O father of the marriageable daughter, sell her
Before the maiden's virtue is lost.
O thou, her father, say not of her: "She is an honorable girl".
When she sees the fellows outside,
5 She acts like an inflamed young mare.

1. "Sell", that is to say: "marry her off"; compare No. 57.
3. Thou canst not call her an honorable girl.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

72.

The Wakening of Love.

×539
832

Yamma, ya rigli, la"ha-lli māši.
'ēn el-'arūse lil-'arīs bitrāši.
Ya lēl ṭūl, ya fegr ma-t'allāši,
lamma yenām el-ḫill waiye ḫalīlo,
5 *u-fa"aš er-rummān 'ala-l-furāši.*

O mother, my foot! He who passes, has touched it!
The eye of the virgin weeps for her bridegroom.
O, night linger on, O, dawn come not nigh,
When my beloved sleeps with his companion,
And breaks open the pomegranates upon the pillow.

1. The passer-by wishes to enter into relations with her.
5. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.

73.

The Day That I Saw Thee . . .

[114] The beginning of a song which Vollers took down from the lips of a blind sailor, at Assuân in 1890. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. LVIII, 228.)

Yōm šuftak ḥabbētak ḫāliṣ,
u-sa'et-lak bil-widd el-ḫāliṣ.

The day that I saw thee, I loved thee dearly.
And I have sought thee with sincere love.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

74.

A Thief in the Night.

539x

This song was usually attached to No. 125.

Of course not a thief who is seeking for valuables. The girl speaks:

Bil-lēl gāni ḥarāmi,
biṭ-ṭūb ṭauwaḥ ʿalēye.
We-nādêt, ma-ḥaddê gāni.

There came a thief by night to me,
And bits of brick he threw at me.
I called, but no one came to help me.

2. Modern Egyptian bricks are exactly like the ancient ones, sun-dried only, not baked. They consist of the tough, Nile mud, which is deposited by the inundation; "bits of brick" are, therefore, rather harmless missiles.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Flatteries.

75.

×539
832

Ya naʿme, ya belīle,
Yammû šaʿūr, ya ṭawīle.

Thou tender one, so like belīle!
Thou, with the abundant hair, thou slender one!

1. Belīle is a favorite dish prepared from corn, milk and honey. The sweetheart is compared with this delicate, sweet dish.

76.

Again, as in the preceding song, slender women are meant.

Ya naḫletēn el-ʿalāli,
ya balaḥkum dawa!

O ye two palms of the upper chamber,
Your dates are medicine!

Dalman has also these two lines, as a refrain to a love-song. In Dalman's song they run thus (p. 249):

Ya naḫlāt bi-l-ʿalāli	O ye palms of the upper chambers,
ya balaḥhum dawa	O their dates are medicine,
Ya nūr ʿl-ʿēn.	O light of the eyes!

Dalman heard the song on a steamer running between Bērût and Alexandria.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

77.

539*

These lines, which Maḥmûd applied to a woman bathing in the river, were almost always combined with No. 40; but they are in all probability a remnant of another song.

Šilbe is a species of silvery, Nile fish. Šilbe ʿarabi is supposed to designate an especially good variety. [136]

ʿāim bēn el-merākib
zē eš-šilbe-l-ʿarabi.

Swimming between the ships
Like the silver-fish.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MRI3
Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521 In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balālīṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[171] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

415
482
291
312
142

Women Drawing Water.

6

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

79.

A Cool Reception.

539x
832

Ya ḥāli 'al-bedawīye.
u-la'etni fid-darb eḍ-ḍaiya'.
wel-ḥātim fi-ṣbaḥha yezaiya'.
Ḥallet el-'āzib mitnaiya'.
5 *Min ginno ḥarra' eṭ-ṭa'īye.*

O, in what a state am I, because of the Beduin girl!
She met me in the narrow path,
And the ring on her finger sparkled. [301]
She left the lad standing, so that he flew into a rage. [152]
5 In wrath he threw his cap into the fire.

1. El-bedawīye (the Beduin girl) is a frequent subject of the songs of the peasant lads.

4. The sudden change from the first to the third person, is not a rare occurrence in such songs.

5. Respecting this cap compare No. 57, note on l. 4.

[P. 84 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

80.

Caution.

x539
832

Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazūl,
wirḫi ḍalal šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

2. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays
[834] a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the
strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the
country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are
[184] not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further
[291] one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

81.

Wind and Love.

539x
832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The [192] man is a watchman (ṛafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself.

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the [342] hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7.

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it [114] being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.]

'Ali 'Elēwe banā-lo fil-gibāl iḥṣāṣ,
biddo yeḥāš el-hawa.
Hāwa el-hawa yinḥāš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
5 *weš-šōk lam yindās,*
wil-bint lam tinḥiṭib,
illa-blammet nās.

'Ali 'Elēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs
563 who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are
[576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir mālya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šāwirtē ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintē šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and
[312] beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

83.

The Language of the Wise.

Aššaret bi-ʿēnêha, fihimt suālîhe;
we-kull el-labîbin bil-ašāre yifhamu.

539*
832
[201]

She made signs with her eyes and I understood
her question;
All wise people understand by signs.

84.

Rose, Look Out!

A young peasant is at work in his field, near a house, in which lives a girl, to whom he would make advances.

Ya warde ṭilli
min ṛēṭ el-fellāḥ!
Ṭallet-li min fōʾ
bil-ḥalaʾ weṭ-ṭōʾ,
5 *lamma ṛamāni eš-šōʾ.*
Fi-ʿarḍik ṭilli.

O Rose look out
Upon the peasant's field!
Then she looked down from above,
With earrings and neck-ring (adorned), [301]
Till longing seized me.
"Have pity, look out!"

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

*534

One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭali'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimal,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fidha-š-šimal.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

86.

A Mighty Helper.

539x
832
[778]

Compare the very similar little song from Cairo, in Lane II p. 81 (hence, of the year 1836)[1]. "He of Embābe" is Shēkh Isma'īn, whose tomb lies in Embābe, near Cairo. In Lane's song the appeal is made to Shēkh Aḥmed of Ṭanṭa (compare No. 8).

Ya-mbābi, yalla, ya-mbābi,
tigma'ni 'ala 'izz aḥbābi!
Win gāni ḥabībi-l-lēle,
la'mil-lo el-kašmīr ḍullēle,
5 *wa'ul-lo: salamāt, ya ḥabībi,*
'izz el-layāli el-lēle.

Thou of Embābe, up, thou of Embābe,
Unite me with my best beloved!
And if my beloved comes to me to night,
I will make for her a baldachin of the cashmere shawl,
5 And say to her: Welcome, my beloved,
This night is the fairest of nights!

4. The couch shall be decked with costly stuffs.

---

[1]) The preceding song in Lane (II p. 81) I also once heard sung, but unfortunately failed to write it down:

Everyone whose eyes are sleeping
Need not think the lover sleeps.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

87.

Long Since Decided.

539
582

Ṭilihtĕ fō' es-suṭāḥ
baški-l-hawa lalla.
Le'ēt telāte beyi'ru fi-kalām Alla.
'ālû-li: tāḫdi-bnĕ 'ammik?
5 *'ultĕ: lā, walla!*
'ālû-li: tāḫdi-bnĕ ḫālik?
'ultĕ: šar' Alla!
'ālû-li: taḫdi-l-ṛarīb?
ḥafattĕ: bismalla!

I mounted to the roof
And unburdened my love to Allah.
There I found three, who were reading in God's Word.
They said to me: Wilt thou take thy cousin on thy father's side?
5 I said: No, by Allah!
They said to me: Wilt thou take thy cousin on thy mother's side?
I said: No, by Allah's law!
They said to me: Wilt thou take the stranger?
Then I said to myself: In Allah's name!

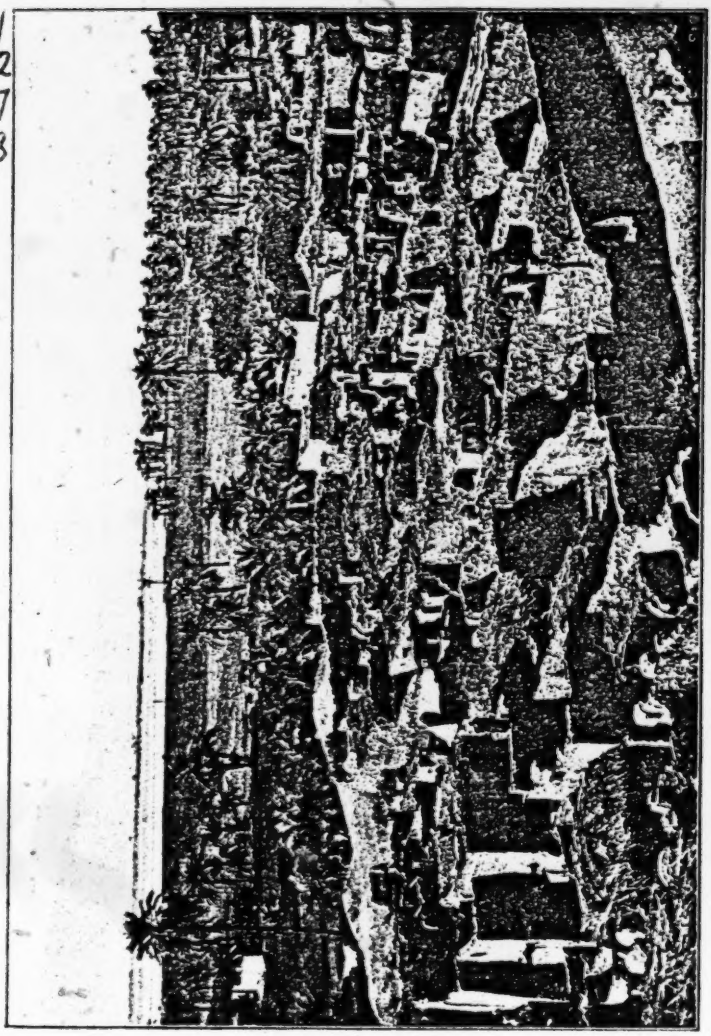
1. During the cooler hours of the afternoon and evening, the roofs are much frequented.

3. Three old men.

4. Marriage between relatives is regarded as most natural. Compare No. 96, note on l. 1.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

361
342
137
133



The Village of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

88.

Hope Deferred ....

539x
832

The lover awaits impatiently an opportunity to join his sweetheart. He compares himself with a ship, which, although ready to set out, is obliged to lie waiting at anchor. "I have waited for two years, and now I give up hope. Therefore let us depart!" — The song was usually combined with No. 131.

El-lēl, el-lēl, ya ḫilli!
Ya ma ṭāl el-lēl ʿala ḫilli!
El-ḫill ya mā-hu ʾāsi!
u-širibt el-kās, ya nāsî,
5 *sanatēn wana ʿal-barr rāsi.*
niḥḍir u-ngurr el-merāsi!

The night, the night, my loved one!
O, how long the night was for me because of my loved one!
O, how hard is the loved one!
I have drunk the cup (of sorrow) ye people,
5 For two years whilst I lay at anchor by the shore.
Now we are ready, let us weigh anchor!

4. The explanation: "cup of sorrow" is Maḥmûds.
5. Two years, an expression for a long time, is used also in No. 130, l. 3. [195]

[P. 94 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

89.

The Wind, the Rogue.

×539
821
[114]

Tantavy, in Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire, p. 222 (hence of the year 1848) has this same little song in a slightly varying form. According to that version we have inserted 'āni in our last line, in order to rhyme with gāni, instead of ḫāli as Maḥmūd gave it.

Ḥabaṭ el-hawa fil-bāb,
'ult el-ḥelēwe gāni.
Atarīk, ya hawa, kaddāb,
beyidḥak 'ala-l-'alb el-'āni.

The wind knocked at the door,
And I said: "My little sweetheart has come to me."
Therefore art thou a rogue, O wind,
Who laughs at a grieving heart.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sick with Longing.

90.

539x
832

Ya ma inte waḥišni,
ya gamīl, we-rūḥi fīk!
Ya me'anis 'albi, le-mīn aškīk?
aškīk lilli 'adir, 'adir yiḥāik
5 *we-yballiṛ eṣ-ṣabir amalo.*
Ana ḥali le-bu'dak lam yirḍīk.

Oh, how lonely thou makest me,
Lovely one, while my spirit is with thee!
O companion of my heart, to whom shall I complain of thee?
I will complain of thee to the Mighty One, — [782]
mighty to guide thee
5 And make the patient one attain (the goal of) his hope.
It will not please thee (when thou seest) what is my state because of thine absence.

4. Of course God; compare No. 87, l. 2. He, alone, has power, so to guide the girl, that she may finally listen to her lover. [776]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

91.

×539 832 Those women are addressed, who torment a lover with hard-heartedness.

'Atīl el-muḥabbe lē tuhgurû?
Mutaiyim u-murram, ma tirḥamû!
Ṭaḥantu fo'ado bi-siḥr il-'iyūn.
Kaffâ ma garā-lo, ta'alu u-nzurû!

Why do ye forsake him, him slain of love?
A slave to love and filled with passion — have pity on him!
Ye have crushed his heart by the magic of your eyes.
That which has befallen him is enough. Come and look upon him!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

92.

The Sweetheart as a Physician for Love-Sickness. 539x

Magrūḥ u-kulli guraḥāti,
ḥaiye hatū-li ṭabībi!
Magrūḥ bi-sinn il-lawāḥiz,
ya rabb, ḥallī-li ḥabībi.

I am wounded, full of wounds,
Up! Bring me my physician!
I have been wounded by a lance of eyes;
O Lord, grant me my beloved!

3. Literally: by the point or sharpness of the glances. The beaming eyes of the beauty pierce like arrows or lances (Vollers). [826]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The Charmer.

x539
832

93.

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
u-ʿala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
libiset ʿuṣēbe wimradde,
witmaiyilet ʿal-muḫadde.
5 *sabbalit ʿiyūn el-muḥabbe,*
ma laḥeʾtiš alaggam ḥoṣāni.

[302] O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love (thee).
She wore a fillet and a gay-colored bodice,
And leaned upon the cushion.
5 She drooped her alluring eyes, —
Then I had no time to curb my steed.

1. We would say: Thy beautifully painted eyes have fettered me.

2. Compare with this strange construction in the Arabic, No. 5, l. 2.

[291] 3. The ʿuṣēbe is a little scarf, which is wound about the head like a fillet. The meradde is the gay-colored front of a vest-like garment.

5. She sends him an alluring, languishing glance from her half-closed eyes.

94. 539x 832

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
ʿala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
El-bēḍa libiset dabūli
weš-šāṭeḥ wel-ʿoʾd el-lūli.
5 *ʿala mir-rāḥ u-gābû-li*
wašṭaḥ-bo nuṣṣ el-layāli.

O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love thee.
The white one wore silk,
And the shāṭeḥ and the necklace of pearls. [301]
5 Who will go and bring her to me? —
That I may recline with her at midnight!

1. Compare No. 93, l. 1.

4. Shāṭeḥ is a head-dress of gold or silver coins sewed in a row on the border of a piece of cloth, so that they lie on the forehead from temple to temple. (Almkvist, Kleine Beitraege p. 854.) Other kinds of head-dress however, are known by this name. (Lane II, p. 356.) [291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

95.

×537
532

A Message of Love.

Il-leʾakum ḥabībi,
sallamū-li ʿalê,
u-msikû-li ṭarfê šālo,
weʿzimû-li ʿalê.
5 *Win ma-rḍīš bil-ʿozūme,*
Alla yehauwan ʿalê.

If my lover meets you,
Greet him me
And hold him by the corner of his shawl
And invite him to come to me.
5 But, if he cares not to accept the invitation,
May Allah forgive him for it!

6. For love of him I forgive him his refusal!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

96.

An Elixir.

"If thou hadst thy happiness to buy at the cost of people's respect, the treasures revealed would carry thee through it all."

Ḥaiya, yabnê ʿammi,
wiš-balāk bil-ṛarām?
Lō šuft nchūdi,
rummān ʿala ʿādi,
5 *la-tmūt yahūdi*
wa-la ʿalēkšê malām.
Lō šuft el-ḥalaʾ
fuidni baraʾ,
la-tšīl bil-ṛalaʾ
10 *wa-la ʿalēkšê malām.*

Up, cousin!
Why art thou so cast down with grief?
If thou couldst see my breasts,
Like pomegranates on my body,
5 Thou mightest die like a Jew,
Without being open to blame!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

[582] [605] 1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnê 'ammi = "cousin" (masc.) and bintê 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 6.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

[461] [857] [631] 9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

97.

Good Friends.

539x 406 [231] [312]

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers.

883 539x [312] [462]

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether the girls of the village have already been there to get water, as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song.

Ya sā'ye, yammû ṭāra,
waradet ʿalēki-l-ʿadāra?
Waradet ʿalēye ummû mandīl
wil-kaʿb zēi el-ḫiyāre.

×539
883

5 *Wet-tōr ʾāl: Dauwarāni,*
amla li-sūd el-ʿiyāni.
Win gat el-ʿagūz, baṭṭalāni,
taḥram ʿalēye-d-doāra.

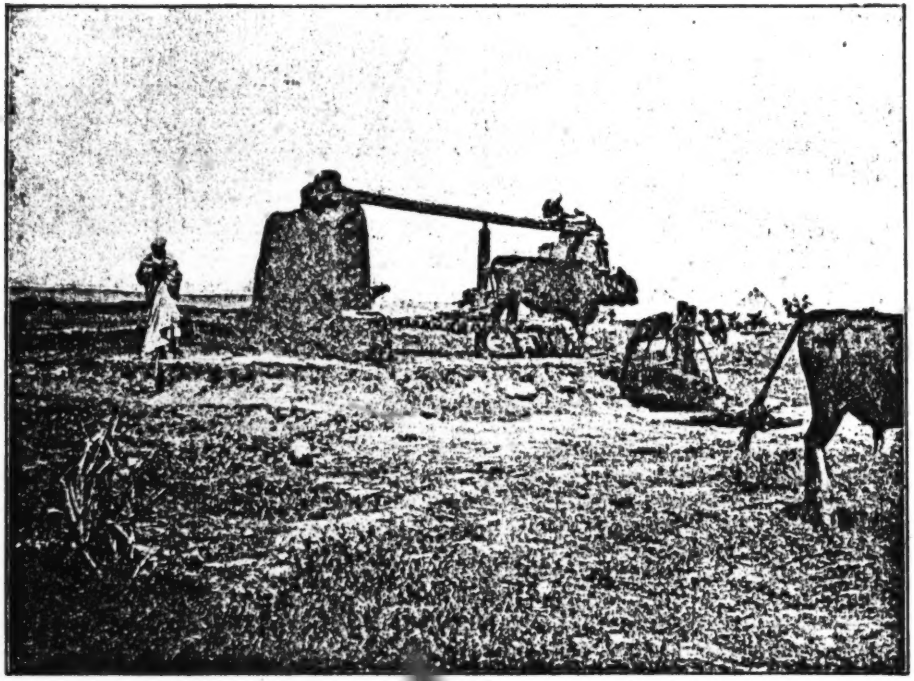
"O sāqye with the huge wheel
Have the girls come down here to thee?"
[824] [826] "One with a head-kerchief has come down to me,
Whose heel is like a cucumber."
5 And the ox said: "Drive me around,
That I may fill for the 'black-eyed'.
If, however, the old one comes, then let me halt,
For then the turning is forbidden me."

4. The comparison of the sweetheart's heels with the tenderness of a cucumber, is a delightfully characteristic notion of the Egyptian peasant. Maḥmûd understood ka'b as "heel", but I should not fail to mention the opinion of Arabists, that a very similarly sounding word (ku'b), meaning "breast", is to be read here.

6. Namely: Fill the trench for the black-eyed girls, who come to draw water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

231
405
291



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Sāqye Near the Great Pyramids.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

98.

Unnecessary Anxiety. 539x

Dāir tedauwar ʿalēye, ya ḫāli, lē?
Ana we-ḥabībi fil-ʾaʿa,
nuʿud saʿa.
Winte zaʿlan lē?

Why dost thou run about looking for me, uncle?
I and my beloved are in the parlor
And shall sit there a while.
Hence why then art thou annoyed?

2. ʾAʿa is the name of the largest room in the harem, which lies in the upper story. For illustration see Lane I Page 18. [342]

[P. 108 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the End of the World!

99.

×539 [551] Shamme is a girl's name.

Ya Šamme, ḥāli, ya Šamme,
ya-msauwaḥāni, ya Šamme,
ya-mgauwi'āni, ya Šamme,
ya-m'aṭṭašāni, ya Šamme,
5 *ḥāli, ya Šamme!*
Larūḥ eš-šām 'ala šān Šamme!

O Shamme, what has become of me, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest restlessly wander about, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest hunger, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest thirst, Shamme,
5 What has become of me, Shamme!
Verily, I would go to Syria for the sake of Shamme!

[804] 6. I would go to the end of the world for her sake! Syria is often used for a long distance. Compare No. 100.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

100. 539x

Ya bint, ya bēḍe,
ʾatalni hawāki.
terāḥi-š-šām
wana bardi warāki.

O maiden, O white one,
Love for thee hath slain me.
If thou shouldst go to Syria,
I would follow thee!

3. Regarding "Syria" see No. 99, l. 6.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

101.

Near the Goal.

×539

Ḥaiya, yabnê ʿammi,
ḥaiya, ya dalîl!
Win gāni ibnê ʿammi,
lašāwar bi-kummi
5 *wa'ul: yabnê ʿammi,*
faragallâh 'arīb.

Up, cousin,
Up, [my] beloved!
And when my cousin comes to me,
I will signal to him with my sleeve,
5 And say: Dear cousin,
The joy of Allah is near!

1. Regarding "cousin", see Nos. 87; 96.
2. Maḥmûd explained dalîl as ḫaṭîb muḫbir.
[291] 4. The sleeves are full and hang down over the hands.
[581] 6. The joy which Allah sends, namely: our union.

A Contrast.

102. (The Beloved.) 539×

Fāyit ʿala darbina
kumm el-yalak wardi,
ʾālu: ḥabībak ḍaʿīf!
ʾultē: inʾilū ʿandi!
5 *muḫaddito rīš naʿāme*
u-masnado ʾalbi.
we-limmu ḥamām el-balad
wes-samnē min ʿandi!

As I was walking in our street,
The jacket-sleeve rose-colored,
They said; "Thy beloved is ill."
I said: "Carry him to me!
5 His pillow shall be of ostrich feathers, [237]
His support, my heart!
Gather the doves of the village, —
I will give the fat (for the roasting)."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539

103. (The Enemy.)

Fāyit ʿala darbina
kumm el-ɣalak ginzār,
ʾālu: ʿadūak ḍaʿīf
ʾultē: iḥdifû fin-nār!
5 *limmu kilāb el-balad*
wes-simmē bil-ʾanṭār!

As I was walking in our street,
The jacket-sleeve rust-colored,
They said: "Thy enemy is ill."
I said: "Pitch him in the fire!
5 Gather the dogs of the village,
And (put) poison (on the roast) by the hundred-weight."

2. Maḥmûd said: ginzāri.

6. Comparison with the corresponding lines of No. 102 shows, that there is reference here also to a roast.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Another Contrast.

539×
574
554

104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gani abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
5 *wazemzem-lo-l-fingal*
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
5 And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

×539
554
574

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behāim
5 *we-šīl waḥlāt iš-šite!*

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
5 And cart off the winter's dung!"

[291] 1. The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).
2. So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.
3. Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

106.

"Love . . . is not Provoked."

539x

Jealous women attempt to blacken a lover in the eyes of his sweetheart. 152

En-nās ʾalû-li: ḥabībik kwoiyis —
ʾultĕ: ai, mā-lo?
ʾalu-mḥanni yemīno —
ʾultĕ: wi-šmālo!
5 *ʾālu: beyiʾlaʿ u-yilbis —*
ʾultĕ: mim-mālo!
ʾālu: beyākul melabbis —
ʾultĕ: hanīyâ-lo!
ʾālu: da fî er-radīye —
10 *ʾultĕ: mīn ṭālo?*
Rūḥu, ya ʿawāzil,
u-baṭṭalu di-l-ʾōl!
illa maʿâ laḥz,
yirmi kullĕ min ṭālo!

People said to me: Thy lover is handsome —
I said: Yes, what is the matter with him?
They said: He colors his right hand with henna — [302]
I said: His left also!
5 They said: He makes many changes in his dress —

539
152

I said: With his own money!
They said: He eats sweets —
I said: May they agree with him!
They said: He is ill-natured —
10 I said: Who has laid hold of him?
Be gone, you jealous creatures,
And cease your talk!
Unless you do, you will learn that his glance
Vanquishes everyone who lays hold of him!

302
157

3. He is an effeminate fop! The dyeing of certain portions of the hands and feet, with the leaves of the henna shrub (Lawsonia inermis), customary among the women and children, is considered, when practiced by men, a sign of effeminacy.

5. He is a dandy.

7. He has a sweet-tooth.

10. That is to say: Who provoked him? He must have had cause for being unpleasant. Maḥmûd interpreted this line as: "min fîkum misik fî" that is to say, "Which of you has laid hold of him."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

107.

Persuasion.

539x
832

The girl comes to her lover, named Abu Mūsa, who is busy at the sāqye (compare No. 97), to fetch him from his work. "Thou wilt find work at home to do, and there thou wilt be near me, and there will be time, too, for something else beside work."

Yabu Mūsa, ḥill et-tōr!
Walla, māna ḥāllo,
lamma maiyil ḍillo.
Ḍillo maiyil u-raḥ,
5 *wa-la ba'āš illa-l-mirwāḥ,*
ṣaffē banāni, ṣaff ilwāḥ,
ṣaff il-ḥōḥ 'ala-t-tiffāḥ!
Ta'āle, ya ḥabībi, wišwešni;
aḥsan rāḥ terḥ we-tūḥašni.

"Abu Mūsa, untie the bull!"
"By Allah! I will not untie him
Until his shadow has grown long." [805]
"But his shadow has already grown long and gone away,
5 And there is nothing left to do but to go

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 And pile up the dove-jars and boards,
832 And pack the peaches and the apples!
Come, my beloved and caress me,
Else thou wilt stay out and leave me alone."

231 1. The bull which turns the sâqye. (Compare No. 97.)

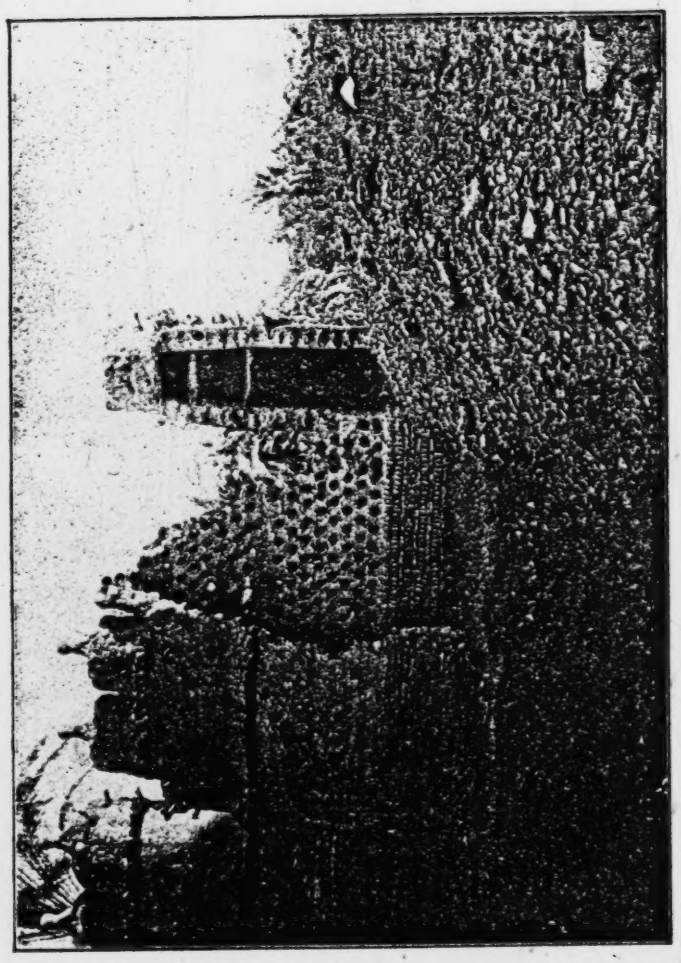
6. The walls of the dove-houses are built of Nile mud
343 and earthen jars, so ranged on each other, that the openings
415 are toward the inside and the bottoms toward the outside. These jars furnish the holes for the nests. The bottoms of some of the jars are knocked out, in order to make entrance-holes. Boards and the ribs of palm-branches, form perches on the inside, while for the outside, branches of trees are usually stuck into the wall.

The illustration shows a half-demolished dove-house, the construction of which is thus made very clear.

These fortress-like dove-houses are to be found especially in Middle Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

235
343



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Ruined Dove-House.
Ehnasye in Middle Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

108.

At the Garden-Door.

539×
832

The friend of a youth advises him as to how he may approach a certain rich and beautiful girl (1—6). The youth himself is also rich (ll. 9—10). The girl is from the maṛrib ("the west", that is to say, the coast-land of North Africa other than Egypt), where the women are noted for their beauty, as are the men for their sagacity. Ll. 7—13 contain narration by the girl. The song was a favorite of our workmen and often sung.

[186]

'Ala bāb il-genēne
windah: Ya gamāl!
Tiṭla'-lak ṣabīye
bēḍa maṛrabīye
5 *bir-ra'abe-ṭ-ṭarīye*
wil-lūli ṛar'ān.

Ḍarab el-bāb bi-īdo,
sammaḥni 'aṣīdo,
'ašara min 'abīdo
10 *tuḍrub bir-ruṭān.*
Daḫalna el-genēne,
be'na wištarēne
we-ḥammalna eg-gimāl.

[p. 122 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539. At the garden-door
822 Call: "O Beauty!"
Then a maiden will come out to thee,
A fair one, from the marrib,
5 With the soft neck,
On which the (heavy) pearls lie sunken.

He struck the door with his hand,
And let me hear his song.
Ten of his black slaves
10 Gabbled together.
We entered the garden,
[195] Sold and bought
And loaded the camels.

12. 13 are an euphemism.

109.

Progress.

539 x

The gallābîye is a cotton, shirt-like garment, reaching [291] to the feet or a little above. It is mostly worn gathered up by means of a belt. It is worn by both men and women.

Ah yāna wez-zemān hannāni,
yabu gallābîye, wez-zemān hannāni.
Ruḥt lil-faṣṣāl yefaṣṣalhā-li,
ruḥt lil-ḫaiyāṭ yeḫaiyaṭha-li,
5 *ruḥt labāye yelabbishā-li*
we-ruḥt lil-ʿarīs yeʾallaḥhā-li.

Oh, how good time has been to me,
I, with the gallābîye, time has been good to me!
I went to the cutter to have him cut it for me, [294]
I went to the tailor to have him sew it for me,
5 I went to my father, to have him put it on me,
And I went to my bridegroom, to have him pull [585] it off me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sweet Medicine.

110.

x 539

Yammů tōb ṣāfi we-šbēka welwān
weš-šiffa-l-ḥamra lam tiṛzil kittan
wil-ʿēn es-sōda lam tiḥmil duḫḫān.

Yammů tōb ṣāfi, ya šarak el-hawa,
5 *u-šaʿrik laṣfar yilʿab-bo-l-hawa,*
u-ṣiḥnî nhādik waṣafû-li dawa.

[291]

O thou, with the light outer garment and the hair-net and the gay clothes,
And the red lip, which has not had to spin flax,
And the black eye, which has not had to endure smoke.

O thou with the light outer garment, thou catch-net of love!
5 The wind plays with thy yellow hair,
And the plate of thy breasts has been prescribed as medicine for me.

1. Under the black, transparent, outer garment, the women wear a gay — usually red or yellow — dress of calico or finer material. Maḥmûd wished elwān = "the colors", understood as applying to this garment.

2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the [286] only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a [354] window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes.

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair [826] was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red".

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the [826] breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd).

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis 'agātak,
Ya miššaḥla' min dān aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nisma' ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḥla' refers to the coquettish movements in dancing [535] and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

112.

x539
832

Gāi min be'īd yitmaḫṭar,
wil-lāli 'ala ṣudro itbaḥtar.
Hāt el-mudām, ya ḫilli, u-nuskar,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām.

She comes, in the distance, with swaying gait,
And the pearls are scattered o'er her breast.
[223] Bring forth the wine, my dearest, we will drink ourselves drunk,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep.

1. See Note on l. 2, No. 111.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Invitations.

113.

The girl makes pretense of showing her lover one of the sand-banks which emerge from the Nile, suffer many changes and disappear, according to the season of the year. Here, of course, it is only a cloak (Maḥmûd). 539x 932 [133]

Yā ṭara, ya ḥabībi,
kuntē fēn el-yōm?
ša'rak mesabsab,
we-'ēnak sable lin-nōm.
5 *Iṭla' bina 'aṣr 'ali,*
ninām we-nišba' nōm.
wafarragak 'ala-l-gezīre,
illi-tnašet el-yōm.

Where, my beloved,
Hast thou been today?
Thy hair hangs on thy brow
And thine eye is heavy with sleep.
5 Let us mount a lofty house
And sleep till we are sated with sleep.
And I will show thee the island
Which has formed itself today.

2. Literally: hangs straight down.

3. 'aṣr, literally: castle, designates a solidly built structure with an upper story. Even a house such as the middle class in the cities possess, is, in the country beside the miserable peasant-huts, designated as 'aṣr, "castle" (Vollers). [342] [565]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114.

Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-ʾaṭīfe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar ʿala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn waḥḥadu Alla!*

"Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
"I have put on the bracelets, sir,
And the green tatooing is on my hand!
5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Taʿālâ-li, ya wād, taʿālâ-li,
taḥtĕ sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yūḥ!).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

116.

Christian and Moslem.

539x 558

A Mohammedan woman has thrown herself away on a Coptic goldsmith. The word nuṣrāni, Christian, always has an odious sound to the Moslem; for this reason the woman thinks she has claim to valuable gifts from her lover. [186]

Ramāni-l-ṛarām, ramāni
taḥtē šibbāk en-nuṣrāni.
Ma ʾultē-lak, ya-mʿallim Mūse?
Duʾ lil-kirdān ʿarūse!
5 *Muslime we-ʿāšiʾet nuṣrāni!*

Love has smitten me, smitten me
Under the Christian's window.
Did I not tell thee, Master Mūsa?
"Fasten a pendant to my necklace!"
5 I, a Moslem, in love with a Christian!

3. Have I not had to ask you once before for the ornament? Meʿallim, master, literally: teacher, is a title given to all Copts, with the exception of the poorest classes. [554]

4. ʿarūse is an ornament, which hangs zē nīšān = like an order, on the necklace. [301]

117.

Light Minded.

×539

Ummāli ē? ummāli ē?
āḫod el-fellaḥ: aʿmil-bo ē?
āḫod el-gindi
abu šāl hindi.
5 *Hāwa yeṛanni*
wanarudd ʿalê.

Of course, what else? Of course, what else?
If I take the peasant, what shall I do with him?
I will take the soldier
With the Indian shawl.
5 He shall sing
And I shall answer him.

118.

Dost Thou Think of Me?

Yasmar, yabu ʿēn ʿasalīye,
garḥê hawāk itmakkan fiye.
Yasmar, yabu-l-libās eṣ-ṣīni,
ana ʿala bālak wala-nte nāsîni.

Thou brown one, with the honey-brown eyes,
The wound of thy love is fast fixed in me.
[291] Thou brown one with the dainty drawers,
Dost thou remember me, or hast thou forgotten me?

[263] 1. Egyptian honey is much darker than ours.
[177] 2. Literally: "Chinese under drawers". Chinese is used here as Indian is in Nos. 56 and 117.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

119.

The Door and the Lover.

Ya bāb, ʾul-li ʿala auwil meṣāḥibetak, 539x
ya bāb, ʾalbi inšabak miʿ ḥubbê ṣāḥibetak, 832
ya bāb, ana kuntê gāi-lak maʿ ṣiyāḥ ed-dīk, 342
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫlaʿak warmīk,
5 *ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫlaʿak, sibtak.*
Ma ʾal-li-l-bāb: Ḫalli el-ʿaʾl sākin fīk,
wiš yiʿmil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gāfik?
Ma ultê: Ya bāb, gāk ḥafsê bi-muftaḥak,
ʿiyūn ḥabībi terāi min bēn ilwāḥak.
10 *Ma ʾal-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li taʿtibni,*
wiš yiʿmil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma ʾultê: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtê ʿalê māli,
u-lē ma ʾābilt el-gamīl badri u-hu-māli,
ʾul-lo, ḫalli yūfi il-miʿād!
15 *Illi ʿalê siʾān ṣauwamni ʿan akl ez-zād.*
ʾasamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-ʿām yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍā-li-b-uaṣlo lasakkano il-alḥād!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805] [825]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground.
5 O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

x539 What shall a door do, if its mistress treat thee
832 coldly?"
342 What I said: "O door, mayest thou sink, together with thy key,
The eyes of my beloved are looking between thy boards."
10 What the door said: "Wherefore dost thou reproach me?
What shall a door do, if its mistress does not want thee?"
What I said: "O door, it is I who have spent all my money for her;
And why have I not met the lovely one, when she went to draw water?
Tell her, to come to the meeting-place at the right time!
15 She, with the beautiful hips, is to blame that I hunger and eat no bread.
In truth and by Allah, and may a year of fast be laid on me,
If she does not grant me union with her, I will give her lodging in the grave!"

13. Compare the remark on No. 77.

15. In the original it is more realistic, namely: thigh. From love-sickness I do not think of eating.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

120.

Ye Stars of the Night!

539x
821

'Alye is the ladylove of the noted hero of romance, Abu Zēd, whose life forms a favorite theme for public recitations. He belonged to the tribe of the Beni Hilāl. [537] [773]

Ya nugūm el-lēl, šūfu mā garā-li!
Mā yenām il-lēl illa abu 'albē ḫali.
Ya ma baket 'Alye 'al-Abu Zēd el-Hilāli!

Ye stars of the night, see what has happened to me!
At night he only, sleeps, whose heart is free.
How hath 'Alye wept for Abu Zēd el-Hilali!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

121.

Jealousy.

*539
152

Ya abyaḍ el-bēḍ, ʾul-li wiš garaḥ ḫaddak,
garḥ es-sikkīn wala munyati ʿaḍḍak?
Sāyiʾ ʿalēk en-nabi, we-sāyiʾ ʿalēk rabbak
ma tiḥšaʾʿ etnēn, wa-ḥyati ʿala ʾalbak.

Thou fairest of the fair, what has wounded thy cheek?
Is it a stab from a knife or has my desire bitten thee?
— — I adjure thee by the Prophet and I adjure thee by thy Lord,
That thou love not two at once, for my life hangs on thy heart.

2. He does not speak out the suspicion which leads to the following.

4. The conclusion probably means: My life hangs upon thy faithfulness.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

122.

Capricious Love.

539x
832

Yabiaḍ, ya ḥilu-l-ʾawām,
yalli ʿala ṣudrak rummān,
kām aṣlaḥak winte raḍbān!
Ṭalet ʿalēna-l-layāli!

Thou white one with the sweet form,
Thou, on whose breast pomegranates lie,
How many, "Allah restore thee", it costs me when thou art angry!
The nights have been too long for us!

3. Aṣlaḥak Allâ (May Allah restore thee) is a much used, [782] ejaculatory prayer.
4. During which we have been far from each other.

123.

Unfaithfulness.

×539 622 661 Šēḫ el-balad is the mayor or head of the village. This office still exists, although much of its power has been transferred to the ʿomde, another of the magistrates of the village.

Minni lē, minni lē,
ya-bnaiye? u-rdēti lē?
Šēḫ baladi wanaʾul-lo ē?
iddāni iš-šabbē, ṭaḥant ʿalē!

"Why dost thou shun me, why dost thou shun me,
My little maid? And why hast thou dealt so ill?"
"He is the shēkh of my village, and what can I say to him?
[231] He loaned me the buffalo-calf and I have ground with it!"

3. How could I, a poor girl, refuse the great man?
4. "Moreover, I was under obligations to him." The mills are often turned by buffaloes.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

124.

Forsaken.

Ḥabīb 'albi hatû-li, ya nās, 539x
šarad minni u-fīdo-l-kās.

Bring me, O people, the beloved of my heart!
He left me while the cup was yet in his hand.

2. In the midst of our happiness together.

125.

Reason for Complaint.

This little song was usually combined with No. 74.

Ya mā telauwum, ya ḫali,
'ala-n-nās el-mabāli!
Salla-l-'iše wa-la yani.

How thou dost reproach, uncle,
The unhappy ones!
Evening prayers are over and he has not come to me.

2. Of course it is lovers who are meant. Do not reproach them because they are often cast down and sad.
3. Have I not good reason for sadness?

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

126.

Recognized.

x 539 832 A girl wishes to ingratiate herself with a certain well-to-do young man (ll. 1—2). He repels her, saying that she bears the name of her other lover plainly upon her lips.

Massik bil-ḫēr, ya-Mḥammed melā'ini,
rākib kuḥēle u-rāḥ el-kummê sittīnî.
Dā'i'a 'ala šiffetak ḥandar
u-'Osmān Bē! 'Iš' el-banāt ṛandara!
5 *Ya rabb, neggīni.*

"Good evening, Moḥammed, who meetest me
Riding a noble mare, and trailing the sleeve yards long."
"[O be gone!] Tatooed in green on thy lips is
The name Osman Bê! — — How fickle are girls when in love!
5 O Lord, save me [from all danger]!"

2. The last words mean literally: trailing the sleeve sixty (yards) long, a great exaggeration.

3. Literally: "Thou hast green color tatooed and the [304] name etc." Regarding tatooing see No. 64. Girls often have the name of a lover tatooed upon themselves. Compare a song from Endor in Galilee, in Dalman's collection, p. 112. "... the hands a work of the Creator and the blue tatooing over them strewn. On her breast she writes Ḥ and M and D." (These letters stand for Ḥ(a)m(a)d, the name of the lover.)

5. This exclamation has no connection with what precedes, [782] as it would seem from the English. It is one of the innumerable, ejaculatory prayers, which Moslems enjoy repeating.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

127.

Disobedient.

539x
521
503

A young wife, against the express command of her husband — very pretty women are kept at home — has gone again at daybreak, to the river, to chat with her former companions, who have come to draw water (see No. 78). Meanwhile sunrise draws nearer and she urges the return home, in order that her husband may not discover her absence.

Ya banāt imlu u-šīlu,
la-n-nahār yiṭla' 'alēye.
Ḫēfe min maḥbūbi yila'ini,
Sīdi u-mḥarrag 'alēye.

O girls, fill and carry away,
That the day may not surprise me.
I fear, that my beloved may meet me.
He is my master and has forbidden me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

128.

An Inquisitive Questioner.

539

A man addresses a woman, who is busy preparing doves.

Yalli gōzik fil-Minye,
dabḥa-l-ḥamām-da-l-mīn?
Dabḥā-l-ḥabībi willi šerīki mīn?

"O thou whose husband is in Minye,
For whom killest thou these doves?"
"I am killing them for my beloved, and whom does it further concern?"

1. "In Minye" is used in the same sense as in the Ṣa'īd", meaning: far away. Compare No. 20, l. 7. Minye is the well-known town in southern Middle Egypt.

[103]

3. Literally: "And who is my partner" (that I should be accountable to him)?

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

129.

A Matrimonial Tiff.

539x
593

The husband has brought some meat for his wife, but has been much delayed. As an excuse, he tells her of the crowd at the railway station. "Say what you please. I have now neither time nor mind to cook", is the answer which he receives.

Gāb-li-l-laḥme
wel-wabūr zaḥme.
Yabn-el-ʾaḥbe
maṭbuḫšē ana.

He brought me the meat
And at the railway station there was a great crowd.
Thou son of a harlot,
I will not cook!

1. We have a like friendly address in No. 131.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

539
832
152

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnêye mis-sahar dablāne.
Sanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Ḥāṣimt ummi wabūye ʿala šāno.
5 *Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.*

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
583 I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
5 Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x
166
464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma 'ultē-lak, ya ma 'ultē-lak 593
winte lissa fi-'angetak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šar'īye,
5 *yaḥdūk bilād el-ṛarbīye,*
tiṣbaḥ 'adīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak 'ala-l-mu'dāf rāiḥ
teṭalla' er-raml es-sāiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Shar'īye,

×539 593 464 5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the [501] better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, [103] are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzīq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has [114] been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 832 [824] A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamaṣni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133.

A Young Wife and an Old Husband.

539x
593

Tiddūni liš-šāib lē?
Ya-ḫsāret šabābi fī!
Eš-šāib yešabšabni
we-ʿaṣāto telehlebni.
5 *Sāʿat ma-nḫušš el-ʾāʿa,*
yibʾa-l-ṛamm meḥauwiṭni.

Why do you give me to the gray-head?
It is a pity to waste my youth on him!
The old man will make me ill,
And his cane will torment me.
5 When we enter the hall,
Grief will constantly surround me!

3. One must think of superstitious usages which are supposed to incline the young wife's love toward the old man. (Vollers.)

5. The principal room of the house. See No. 98, note on l. 2. [342]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

134.

A Motto.

×539 114 517

When Maḥmûds stock of songs was exhausted, he came once again and dictated to me this song, in praise of the comfortable, dreamy mood, the "kēf", which the Egyptian loves so dearly. He insisted that I should place it as a sort of motto at the beginning of my book; he probably meant before the love-sonnets. (Maḥmûd called a love-song: ṛunet hawa).

Maḥlak, ya kēf,
'and arbab el-ṛarām, maḥlak!
Mašnak, ya kēf,
'and illi ma yidriku ma'nak.

How sweet art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of lovers, how sweet!
How hateful art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of those, who understand not thy meaning!

4. . . . and therefore do not know what to do with thee.

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[For information on Fellahin songs, see category 116, pp. 1-148.]

8: Schaefer
539

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[For the native text of Fellahin songs, see category 116, pp. 1-148.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

UPPER EGYPT:

000

ITS PEOPLE AND ITS PRODUCTS.

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT
OF THE
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND OCCUPATIONS OF
THE PEOPLE OF THE NILE VALLEY, THE DESERT, AND THE RED SEA COAST,
WITH SKETCHES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY AND GEOLOGY.

BY

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WITH A PREFATORY NOTICE

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CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quar-
[574] ters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after 512
the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys [782]
his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of [264]
bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt
fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, 512
especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies 513
down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady
spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets
become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does [783]
he again move, when he begins the second portion of the [782]
day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, [264]
afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up
during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed
and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with 512
the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is 461
again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings [782]
by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning
shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less 461
leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not over- [241]
work himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

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After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablieh*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanieh*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

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gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [514] [461] [204] 484 [188] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

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512 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours,
562 yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

Before sunrise women and children are already awake and
[513] moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn pro-
515 ceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette,
[512] however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention; the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and
[368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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562 [512] again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are [834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im- [554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that [834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already [171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up [184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its [554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed, [195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the [834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common [264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his [783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*esmk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

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THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen [848] virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery com- [684] mitted by a woman was punished with drowning down to a short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Muselman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses *some advantages on moral grounds*; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

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even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and 595
all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an additional wife because his first one has not presented him [842]
with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility. And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when 586
the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change of wives, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time. This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if [554]
he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuccessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female 567
slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The 586
father must always maintain the children that any divorced wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore, forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this and other reasons it is very common among the higher [595]
classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to these matters, since the state does not concern itself about matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesiastical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some weak attempts

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586 at reconciliation, has always to give effect to the expressed wish of the husband. The wife also can press for a divorce, and is not, therefore, devoid of all rights; but in this case, besides losing her maintenance, she also, as a rule, loses the [583] jointure that would otherwise fall to be paid to her by the husband as stipulated in the marriage contract. The divorce cannot be judicially forced from the husband, he must say the words "Thou art repudiated," and if he will not do so he has to give his wife a *bêt shêr 'ai*, that is, a separate dwelling and maintenance; it is a kind of divorce *a mensa et thoro*. During the continuance of this relationship the woman can- [587] not marry again, though of course the husband can. But during the proceedings, with which a multitude of laymen, both summoned and unsummoned, mix themselves up, the husband often becomes morally pliant, or is induced by cunning to utter the words, whereupon the case at once comes to an end. The phrase "thou art repudiated" is fatally momentous, the mere utterance of it, even in the heat of a quarrel, results in separation, and "thrice repudiated" even in complete divorce (see below). If a person writes these words down and in joke asks a Mohammedan to read them, he absolutely refuses to read them aloud. The asseveration "by repudiation," or stronger "by threefold repudiation," is equivalent to a solemn oath. The greater number of disputes in cases of matrimonial separation arise on account of the children, whom neither the father nor mother would like to part with. They, together with the matter of expense, are what unites most closely the bonds of marriage, otherwise so loose. Up to a certain age, which differs among the various so-called sects of Mohammedans—among the Hana- [795] fites, for instance, being the seventh year, among the Shafaites the second—the child remains with its mother, while the father pays for its support, and in return has the right of seeing it as often as he wishes. Henceforth the father, if he has satisfactorily supported it hitherto, can take the child altogether to himself, and he usually does so if it is a boy.

[587] The divorced wife returns to her parents, who generally soon succeed in finding another settlement for her. In a

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great many cases the separation is only temporary, the husband and wife make up their quarrel and come together again without any farther formalities than the consent of the kadi. When the severest form of divorce has been pronounced, however, namely, with the formula of threefold repudiation, a reunion becomes not such an easy matter. For such cases there exists the well known and peculiar law of the *mostahill* (literally "permission-maker"). A third person has formally to marry the divorced woman and put her away again, whereupon the husband can again take back his former wife. Men who are endowed with the minimum of personal advantages are usually selected to act as these middle men, and they are paid for their welcome services. Cases of this sort are certainly rare, being considered disgraceful. It sometimes happens also that the pair joined in this momentary marriage take each other's fancy, the intermediary will not give up the woman joined to him, and no power can tear them asunder if they do not wish it. The law just mentioned is said to be founded on the awakening of jealousy. 586 589

The man of the middle and lower ranks who has more than one wife usually has his harem, with children and attendants, in different houses, or in different portions of the same house specially constructed for the purpose; and in order to give satisfaction to all parties, a good polygamous husband eats and sleeps in regular alternation, the one day in the house of one wife, the next in that of another. These look upon themselves as relatives, and from time to time pay each other at least ceremonial visits. Indeed there are a great many examples of several wives living together peacefully, obediently, and free from jealousy. Of quarrels arising from jealousy much less is heard than one would have beforehand assumed. By his supreme powers the husband maintains order, and jealousy frequently takes even the form of a praiseworthy struggle how each wife may appear more amiable in the eyes of her husband than her rivals. Most women give up from the first the idea of requiring their husband to remain true to them, and jealous women are even laughed at by their female friends. The ideal romantic love 595 [831]

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595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[83] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional
165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

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FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed. 796

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices. 796 262 [621]

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month 796 [785]

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796 the people begin to be in an active and excited state. Numerous groups collect in the open spaces and scan the
[821] western horizon to see if they can discover the new moon; since it is only on the testimony of a Moslim that he has seen the new moon—though he may be a man of no account whatever—that the festival can begin. Even the most accurate astronomical calculation, so far as this is possible, has not the same authority. The rising and setting of the new as well as of the full moon are not regulated exactly by those of the sun, since the synodic or lunar month contains 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes, and the time of conjunction, when moon, earth, and sun are in a right line, happens at very different hours of the day in different months. The time at which the new moon, so eagerly looked for by the Mohammedans, first reappears after astronomical new-moon also depends upon the season of the year; it is seen earliest in the spring months, for reasons depending upon the position of the moon's path relatively to that of the sun. An astronomer says that he has not seen the moon earlier than forty hours after nor later than twenty-seven hours before the astronomical new-moon, but that by a combination of all favourable circumstances this may even happen within twenty-four hours, and travellers maintain that they have seen the old moon on the morning and the new moon on the evening of the same day. To these considerations one is led who every year looks on, while the Moslimin thus eagerly and for the most part uselessly watch the heavens. Since the official calendar pays no attention to this important
[805] method of determining Ramadan, it simply gives, now to one month, now to another, thirty or twenty-nine days in order to make up the total of 354. Accordingly, when the first of Ramadan occurs in the calendar, it is by no means certain whether at the same time the new moon is visible. The more scientific among the heads of the province often actually cause the fast to be altered a day till the moon is perfectly visible in the evening sky. When Ramadan falls in winter, at which season the sky is often clouded, and in high latitudes, where it is gloomy for weeks at a time, the determina-

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tion of Ramadan is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the province are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206] moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785
has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796
proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [202] the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[34] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[702] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street.
[735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his 796
nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of [788]
reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the
usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging
of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the
dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at
other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed;
numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, [443]
have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night,
cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and
old; the café's are all well attended, and if one pleases he can [265]
now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee [262]
or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also
sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread,
or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the 538
by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, some-
times bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by [534]
scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master
of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the
innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws [533]
from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boy-
hood and the time when we received our first music lessons
on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There
the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and
poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses,
the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his
viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which
form the material for every one of those tales, the number
of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore
—purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with 796
more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "pre- 574
pares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats
them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour pre-
vails, and at no time the whole year through does the
Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of
Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes
a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[282] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
[i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analys]

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796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast
[178] of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

[796] [178] [535] [186] [272] [443] [187]

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet plantel on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their darling to be visible to a distance.

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000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
536 coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] glor stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a [534] mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*hud el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el bisal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover," he did recover, [804] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday [783] has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*yum'a el mufruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath [796]
of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this [778]
day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye- [826]
powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, [757]
a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the [789]
coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) [574]
these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals [805]
are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before [788]
onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of [943]
coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces [252]
and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent [521] [526]

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796 [527] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

753 796 [776]

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

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tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for in- [171]
stance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
[262] melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they are invited for the following day. Above the head of the sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-necked (*dowik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums, the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

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527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
279 generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
273 stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
533 by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
535 to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *bals*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
354 water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
292 embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
301 over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
302 girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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lourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

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[534]

Dancing girl.

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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters

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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533] while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534] under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838] the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 709
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [193] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

786 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-
796 known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*munshed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *funtasiek* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

"She (the loved one) has made me a cup
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 587 [584] [145]

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582 [145] away, that is, are arranged to marry some boy or other, and as soon as both arrive at puberty they are married. Men marry as a rule from their fifteenth to their eighteenth year. These early marriages appear to have by no means a degenerating influence upon the race, but on the contrary a beneficial one, the marriages being, with few exceptions, fruitful and happy, and the women being not so liable to be attacked with female ailments, such as chlorosis, hysteria, and nervous weakness. The same principles are applied also in the case of the domestic animals.

In a learned treatise by a modern Arabic physician who studied in Europe it is maintained, however, that for the men of his country the age of eighteen to twenty, for the women of sixteen, is the most suitable. The main consideration relative to early marriages, the bread question, is regarded by the Oriental only as of secondary importance, he only thinks of it when he is hungry. So long as the son is still too young the father provides for the maintenance of him and his family, [581] when he is old enough he earns his daily bread himself, and when the father grows old the son in turn provides for him.

584 When their young son wishes to have a wife the father and mother set out in quest of a bride for him; by the latter the bath is often selected for this purpose, and her sober reason often brings more suitable pairs together than the impulses of the heart. Both young people have also to acquiesce in the arrangement, they cannot be forced, and the marriage is not valid until on the "uncovering and unveiling" the pair feel a mutual pleasure; but at this age a refusal is rare, and in case of after disillusion the marriage may be easily dissolved on either side. The search for a bride is generally quite unnecessary, as in two-thirds of the cases it has been previously settled that the young fellow is to marry his female cousin, and if he has none, more distant relations are applied to, and lastly strangers. If these marriages of cousins had 582 really such a prejudicial effect upon a race as they are usually represented to have it must have been long ago noticed in Egypt; its inhabitants, however, show no inferiority either from a physical or an intellectual point of view. The low

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The low 000
rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden 582
between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters.

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made 583
between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, [584]
and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be [586]
divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife 421
has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown.

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage 585
banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity [262]
that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle.

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. [515]
In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body scaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall.

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585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The
[290] immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the
[292] house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[300] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

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with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

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764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house"
[825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give
[562] themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians,
[171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor
[693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

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abodo. The corpse-washer goes to work with the utmost 764
care; he washes the body up and down, repeatedly cleaning
out all external openings, including the nose and ears, and [767]
stops them with cotton; cotton is placed even between the
toes and fingers and under the armpits. After the body is
dried with equal care it is enveloped in the linen cloth, which
has meantime been sewed together, and in such a way that
no part of the dead is now visible. It is then laid on a bier
without a coffin (it is only the Christians that hastily put a [184]
coffin together), and a green or red pall is spread over it.
After a benediction has been said over it in the mosque, it is
carried to the graveyard.

Hither the dead are borne at a rapid pace, those at least that were Mohammedans. With a haste and hurry that nothing can check the funeral procession rolls along, amid the murmur of *la ilah ill allah*, in order to carry the bier from the city of the living to the city of the dead. The advanced guard is formed by some blind and poor people and petty scribes, perhaps also some boys as a kind of choristers, and some flag-bearers. The bier is borne by four men, friends of the deceased, who are relieved by others of his friends, and thus the rapid march does not meet with the slightest interruption. A long procession of mourners and sympathizers follows, all in their ordinary working-day blouses, the relatives in the oldest and filthiest possible. Several portly well-to-do gentlemen pant behind, or have got themselves mounted upon trotting asses. By the side or at the end of the procession follows the wailing chorus of women, [834]
who on this day show remarkably little of their usual strictness in veiling themselves.

Having reached its destination, the corpse, wrapped only in its white shroud, is taken from the bier and let down without a coffin into a perpendicular excavation. During this proceeding, if the corpse is that of a female her former street mantle is held spread out over her in order to keep off longing glances—under such circumstances little to be expected. It is not the perpendicular excavation, however, that receives the dead body, which, being protected by no

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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] ing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [154]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
lewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [191]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not processed]

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512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

569 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

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major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue.

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later.

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study.

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

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Introduction

THEORETICAL LEADS AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

THIS is a study of the social and psychological aspects of education in a village community in which an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted. For the sociological part which forms the main body of the book, the writer has attempted to utilize many of the conceptual categories and methods usually employed in studies of total culture which aims at creating out of the diverse pieces of human realities 'a coherent representation of a society, in terms of the general principles of organization and motivation that regulate behaviour in it'.[1] To achieve this purpose, many of the theoretical assumptions utilized in research in Anthropology and Sociology have been applied, for 'there can be no valuable empirical observations without the lead of a theory'.[2] There is no claim of originality in the theoretical leads of this work, as the writer only attempted to examine 'how finely some tools given by wiser men might cut'. It is becoming increasingly important in any research to satisfy three main requirements; the first is to make explicit one's own assumptions that guided the work; the second is to describe the methods and techniques used; and the third is the extent to which one's ideas and methods have undergone change during the actual work, for research is equally a learning process for the person conducting it.[3]

Throughout the book the cultural approach has been the dominant one. The appreciation of 'culture' as a phenomenon *sui generis* and its explanatory value for the understanding of human behaviour have been one of the major achievements of modern anthropology.[4] There is no need here

[1] Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, London, 1945, Foreword, p. vii.

[2] B. Malinowski, in his preface to A. Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, London, 1932, p. xi.

[3] Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, New Haven, 1941, p. 6.

[4] In such a statement, it is recognised that the continuity of culture does not depend upon the existence of any particular individuals. Clyde Kluckhohn and William Kelly, 'The Concept of Culture', *The Science of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 78–106. However, there need be no contradiction between viewing culture as organic or personalistic and

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to discuss the development of this concept of culture; it is sufficient only to state the ways in which the term is to be used. Wherever possible, the writer has tried to perceive culture at its three levels, the functional, the historical and the psychological.

What Malinowski expressed as the functional point of view is concerned with the interrelatedness of the various institutions, social structures, artifacts, mental and moral disciplines in the life of the human group studied. The functional approach is basically 'holistic', and culture is conceived as an integral in which the various items are interdependent.[1] As the social system is not an aggregate, but an integrated whole, 'the function of a particular usage is the contribution it makes to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system'.[2]

The second level of 'culture' is the historical; time being as important as space. Temporal factors and historical determinants have been taken into account by many of the present-day 'functionalists' for the understanding of the social present and of the phenomena of social change.[3] [175] It would have been of great value if there had been historical records about the village under study; there are even no past statistics that might indicate the historical development of such social items as population, resources, division of land and the like. For the villagers, history is mainly [173] what is contained in the memories of the living generations through oral transmission, or what is communicated by the literate section of the community, e.g. smatterings of the history of the Arabs, the Prophet and the Saints. It is obvious, however, that the village cannot be considered as a self-contained structural unit but has to be related to the forces of the national history and their repercussions, if any, on the village.[4]

In dealing with the psychological level of culture, the trend is not so clear, since this approach is relatively recent. Moreover, the issue concerning the extent to which a sociological study of this kind should extend its inquiry into the psychological field has not been fully accepted.[5] Added

as super-organic or impersonalistic, provided we are aware that they are two different levels of abstraction, with the former being prior to the latter logically and genetically. David Bidney, 'Human Nature and the Cultural Process', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 580.

[1] B. Malinowski, article 'Culture' in *Encyclopædia of Social Sciences* and in *Scientific Theory of Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

[2] Radcliffe-Brown, quoted by E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, p. 54.

[3] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 60. For a criticism of the extreme functionalists who ignore the historical dimension see A. Victor Murray, 'The Limits of Functional Anthropology', in *Overseas Education*, Vol. X, 1938–9, pp. 41–5, and Max Gluckman, 'An Analysis of the Sociological Theories of Bronislow Malinowski', *Rhodes Livingstone Papers*, No. 16, O.U.P., 1949.

[4] Julian H. Steward, *Area Research* (Social Research Science Council), New York, 1950, p. 22.

[5] The British school of Anthropology, in contrast with the American school, is on the whole reluctant to include the 'subjective' psychological phenomena of 'culture' in its

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to this, is the fact that there is no single system of psychology which one could apply with scientific assurance; and even experimental psychology contains an air of unreality and artificiality with regard to cultural and social behaviour.[1] Yet the increasing attempts for rapprochement between the social sciences as an ideal to be achieved, as evidenced in the challenging literature already written, made the writer convinced of the value of an integrative approach in his study.[2]

Nadel, for instance, maintains that both the functional and historical approaches to culture imply, to a greater or lesser degree, the influence of psychological phenomena, but that in neither of them is the part played by psychology in human culture explicitly and openly recognized.[3] Moreover, many of the American anthropologists assert that 'there is more to any culture than meets the eye', and that the 'functionalists' have only confined themselves to the 'overt' or 'explicit' aspects of culture that lie open to observation. The data of culture, however, contain 'feelings', 'thoughts', and 'motivations' for which they suggested terms such as 'covert' or 'implicit' culture which is not synonymous with 'subjective'.[4] In this way society is likened to the individual, the understanding of whom does not only depend on what he can tell us, or what he knows about himself, but equally on what he is reticent about and what he does not know about himself, which is an important factor in his personality.[5]

The recent interest in the psychological phenomena of culture has produced a specific type of approach called the 'typological or characterological', expressed mainly in the writings of Mead, Benedict, and Bateson. The three writers in their statements have attempted to establish an analogy between the variations between cultural selectivity and the individuals' temperaments, thus bringing problems of psychology to the foreground in sociological research. According to Mead, 'each simple homogeneous culture can give scope only to a few of the varied human endowments, disallowing or penalizing others too antithetical to its major emphases to find room in its walls. Having originally taken its values from

orbit of inquiry and prefers to keep the two disciplines separate. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit.

[1] F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychological Methods and Anthropological Problems' in *Africa*, Vol. X, 1937, pp. 401–19.

[2] A plea for inter-disciplinary approach for 'the explanation and prediction of human behaviour, individual and collective' is made by John Gillin, 'A Unified Science of Human Behaviour' in *Social Forces*, Vol. XXVIII, October 1949, pp. 110–12. The same need runs through all the writings of Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London, 1946; *Man and Society*, London, 1946; his introduction to Viola Klein, *Feminine Character*, London, 1946. Studies towards the Integration of Social Science are carried out by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations; see its journal *Human Relations*.

[3] S. F. Nadel, 'The Typological Approach to Culture' in *Character and Personality*, Vol. V, 1937, p. 268.

[4] Covert—overt culture is Linton's term, and explicit—implicit is Kluckhohn's.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Covert Culture and Administrative Problems' in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943, pp. 213–29, and his review of Malinowski's 'Dynamics of Culture Change' in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LI, 1946, pp. 571–3.

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the values dear to some human temperaments and alien to others, a culture embodies these values more and more firmly in its structure, in its political and religious systems, in its art and literature, and each new generation is shaped firmly and definitely to the dominant trends.'[1] For Benedict, cultural configurations are mere expressions of autonomous psychological trends, leading to the integration of culture and producing the 'ideal type' and the 'deviant'. In this way, the typical personality amongst the Plains Indians is somewhat manic or Dionysian, while that of the Zuni Indians is self-effacing or Apollonian.[2] Bateson explains culture change as the appropriateness of such a given change to the properties and 'genius' of the culture concerned. The circularity between the individual and his society must mean that 'the culture in some way affects the psychology of the individuals, causing whole groups of individuals to think and feel alike. A culture perpetuates itself through education, inducing and promoting certain types of psychological processes, or by selection, favouring those individuals who have an innate tendency to psychological processes of a certain kind.'[3]

The exponents of the 'culture pattern theory' have been subjected to various criticisms. The type of integration they infer is 'impressionistic' and oversimplified. Other critics maintain that the patterns formulated are of an 'aesthetic nature' rather than scientific, and that pattern-consciousness is a product of the mind of these writers and not necessarily derived from the cultural data observed.[4] If this 'pattern-formation' is based on an analogy with the individual, psychologists, and especially clinical psychologists, categorically deny the fact that there is an individual who is 'fully integrated' or 'inherently harmonious'.[5] As one of the most trenchant critics of the cultural pattern theory, Nadel finds it something of a miscellany made up of various cultural sectors and forces, e.g. unconscious choices, tacit impulses and diffuse emotional motives, rational purposes, and moral values and judgments.[6] If some kind of integration is necessary for the survival of society, it does not necessarily have to be focused on one *idée fixe*, a single attitude or value about which the rest of cultural content is organized. 'Many cultures seem to include a considerable number of attitudes and values all of which are significant, and each of which serves as a focal point for the integration of a different sector of the total culture.'[7]

[1] Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, London, 1935, Introduction.

[2] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, London, 1949.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, Cambridge, 1936, p. 113.

[4] Petrim Sorokin, *Society, Culture and Personality*, New York, 1947, pp. 337–41, reviews the various concepts of integrations and attempts to establish the criteria of causal-functional and meaningful logico-aesthetic integration. See also S. F. Nadel, op. cit.

[5] Géza Roheim, *Psycho-Analysis and Anthropology* (*Culture, Personality and the Unconscious*), New York, 1950.

[6] *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, pp. 391–2.

[7] Ralph Linton in Abraham Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, New York, 1939, Foreword, p. ix.

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While the 'typologists' have carried their concept of integration to that length, the critics of their approach however have not abandoned the concept of 'the unitary character of society', not on a single value or affect, but in a threefold frame of reference, including the integration of purposes, a pattern of psychological nature and a pattern of logical consistency. With the alignment, coincidence, and interrelation of these facets of culture, its possible unity and consistency emerge as an outcome of analysis and social understanding. In this way, certain constellations of cultural behaviour could be solely and intelligibly understood in terms of either logical consistency or rational purposes, implying some measure of fitness between this type of behaviour and its psychological functions. However, certain actions cannot be explained in the light of these two categories, being irrational or non-logical, and in such cases psychological explanations are required and appropriate.[1]

With this frame of reference, it would be possible to conceive different expressions in cultural contents as well as selected biases and 'preferred persistent tendences' as put forward by Bartlett.[2] From Nadel and Linton, the writer finds his most satisfactory theoretical explanations for the selectivity of culture and for the interlocking of its contents, and he turns now to search for his leads with regard to the various methods used by a society for its cultural continuity. This leads to the vast field of culture, personality, and national character studies which has been extending so rapidly during the last ten years. The purpose of these studies is to ascertain how various cultures affect the personality of their individuals, producing different personality structures. What is meant here by the personality is neither the autonomous nor the purely biological or universal characteristics of the individual. Personality must be viewed primarily as a configuration of responses which an individual has developed as a result of his experience.[3] With Linton's masterly analysis of the relation between culture and personality, it is only important here to note that by the explanatory concept of personality we mean the 'typical individual' or, according to Bartlett, 'the Social Personality'.[4] It is impossible to give here any adequate review of such studies, but it could be stated that they bring out the impact of culture, the ways it conditions individual behaviour, motivations, perception, and attitudes, and portray the cultural forces

[1] S. F. Nadel, op. cit., Chapter xiii.

[2] F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering*, London, 1932, p. 255.

[3] R. Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality*, London, 1947, p. 83. G. Bateson, 'The Cultural Determinants of Personality', in McV. Hunt (ed.), *Personality and Behaviour Disorders*, Vol. XI, New York, 1944. P. Sorokin, likening the newly-born baby to a phonograph, says with reference to the biological endowments that 'a well-constructed phonograph, to be sure, plays any record better than a poorly constructed phonograph. . . . But what "socio-cultural records" he will play (whether a Beethoven symphony or jazz) are dependent relatively little on the biological factors and are acquired mainly through the process of interaction with other human beings.' Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 5.

[4] 'Personality Structure', like 'culture', is an abstraction, based on the observation of the 'norm' in variations of behaviour exhibited by individuals.

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121 producing a type of personality with 'predictable behaviour'.[1] Many of these studies, under the influence of the Freudian psychology, lay their emphasis on child-rearing practices, such as sphincter control, the weaning situation or manner of swaddling, as the basic determinant of adult personality or national character, or as ultimate causes of Japan's or Germany's going to war.[2] Moreover, many of these studies ignore or attribute little importance to social institutions, value systems, and forces of history, economics, and politics. One of the most sober and balanced approaches to this question is that of Kluckhohn and Leighton in their writings on the Navaho.[3]

This approach of Culture-Personality brought to the forefront the problems involved in the individual's development and his adaptation to the cultural situation in the process of growing up. Some social anthropologists, such as Firth and Richards, have described 'what' is transmitted to the growing child during his life cycle, but 'how' the transmission of the cultural heritage takes place has received less attention.[4] According to Kardiner, the 'minutiae' of the cultural procedures are as important as the end-product to the understanding of both culture and personality formation.[5] It is only recently that anthropology, enriched by personality psychology and psycho-analytical concepts, has concerned itself with the genetic development of cultural norms, attitudes, and skills in the growing individual. This type of approach, with its varying emphases, is sometimes called 'diachronic', explaining how an antecedent condition of society is converted into some subsequent condition and thus includes the study of individuals.[6] In the 'synchronic' approach, however, culture is regarded as something 'given' and as a matter of adult transmission from one group to another and from one generation to another. 'The supposed "givenness" of culture is the most serious obstacle to our real understanding of culture and culture change and their relationship to individual personality. . . . From the culture-acquiring child point of view, we find that culture is .

[1] For a valuable collection of articles on this theme of 'Culture-Personality' see Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray (ed.), *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, New York, 1948. For a good bibliography and survey of studies on national character see Julian H. Steward, ibid., pp. 75–83, and G. Bateson, 'Morale and National Character', in Godwin Watson, *Civilian Morale*.

[2] An extreme example of this approach is Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People*, New York, 1948, and in collaboration with J. Rickman, *The People of Great Russia*, London, 1950. For a specific type of approach to national character see Raymond B. Cattell, 'The Dimensions of Culture Patterns by Factorization of National Characteristics', in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October 1949.

[3] A. and D. Leighton, *The Navaho Door*, Harvard University Press, 1945. A. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *The Children of the People*, Harvard, 1948.

[4] See Meyer Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, London, 1938, p. 6.

[5] A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, New York, 1945, p. 4.

[6] M. Mead, 'Character Formation and the Diachronic Theory', in M. Fortes (ed.), *Social Structure*, Oxford, 1949, p. 18.

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something to be gradually and gropingly explored and discovered"[1] 131

This approach has resulted in a number of studies on the 'socialization' and the 'growing up' of the individual in his or her cultural context, showing how the child in its development gradually approximates to the general orientations of the social personality of the mature adult. In this manner, these studies directly touch the educational issues involved in social and cultural adaptation. They bring to the forefront the ways in which the individual becomes a culture-carrier and a culture-modifier. The details of the learning process, 'the cultural shaping of appetites', the social disciplines, and the system of reward and punishment, all find their place in the study of socialization, through which cultural transmission is made possible by replacing 'outer force' by 'inner compulsion'. In this manner the link between 'culture' and 'education' becomes obvious, and the approaches of cultural anthropology and sociology can be greatly relevant to educational questions.

This process of replacing the social force by individual acceptance of a basic minimum of conformity has led to the adoption of certain theoretical concepts and findings of psychology by some social anthropologists. In this particular field of child development, the work of psycho-analysts and clinical psychologists has been the most relevant to anthropologists. Some of their findings, believed to be universal with regard to characteristics of adolescence or the absolute connection between toilet training, early infantile experience, and character traits, have been checked and modified by anthropologists working in cultures different from the European background.[2]

However, the orthodox psycho-analytical emphasis on childhood experiences to the minimization of later possibilities of re-education has been criticized by many psychologists and psycho-analysts of the so-called 'Neo-Freudian' school, with its sociological orientation.[3] Whatever the criticism of clinical psychology may be, the writer accepts their assumption that childhood training and disciplines form one of the resources of society for channelling human energy into the preferred cultural responses. The position of psycho-analysts sophisticated with the findings of social anthropology is made clear in Erikson's recent work on *Childhood and Society* from which the following statement has been taken in connection with education amongst the Sioux Indians:

'A first impression suggests that the cultural demand for generosity received its early foundation from the privilege of enjoying the nourishment and reassurance emanating from the unlimited breast-feeding; while the necessity of suppressing the biting rage contributed to the tribe's always ready ferocity.

[1] E. Sapir, 'The Emergence of the Concept of Personality in a Study of Cultures' in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. V, 1943, pp. 408–15.

[2] M. Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, New York, 1946.

[3] Famous amongst these 'Neo-Freudians' are Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and Abram Kardiner.

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THEORETICAL LEADS AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

121 'We are not saying here that their treatment in babyhood causes a group of adults to have certain traits—as if you turned a few knobs in your child-training system and you fabricated this or that kind of tribal or national character. In fact we are not discussing traits in the sense of irreversible aspects of character. We are speaking of goals and values and of the energy put at their disposal by child-training systems. Such values persist because public opinion continues to consider them "natural" and does not admit of alternatives. . . . But values do not persist unless they work, economically, psychologically and spiritually, and I argue that to this end they must continue to be anchored, generation after generation, in early child-training; to remain consistent, must be embedded in a system of continued economic and cultural syntheses. For it is the synthesis operating within a culture which increasingly tends to bring into close-knit thematic relationship and mutual amplification such matters as climate and anatomy, economy and psychology, society and child-training.'[1]

Kardiner, in collaboration with Linton, is perhaps one of the most important clinical psychologists who have applied psycho-analysis to the study of culture. He developed the concept of basic personality structure, an abstraction which can be deduced from the content and organization of a culture, with a kind of dialectic between it and the cultural institutions. Kardiner maintains that, in this way, his scheme is interactional and dynamic, as 'changes in certain institutions result in changes in basic personality structure, while such basic personality changes, in turn, lead to the modification and reinterpretation of existing institutions'.[2] Kardiner and Linton themselves are aware of the difficulties in their concept of the basic personality structure and especially that of equating it with the personality of the individuals of that society. Its advantage, however, over the framework of the culture pattern exponents, is that it groups together certain interrelated items of behaviour and treats them as units. A number of institutions and constellations of institutional behaviour may be orientated towards food, another towards sex, and a third towards attitudes arising out of childhood training. This concept of the 'basic personality structure' takes into account the varied range of cultural institutions with such values as rank, prestige, and status. Such an approach renders it possible to make certain predictions about the institutions which such a personality structure is likely to invent, accept, or reject.[3] Unlike the orthodox psycho-analysts, Kardiner includes in his scheme the boon of culture as well as its discontents, as evidenced in his emphasis on the term 'ego structure' rather than 'the libidinal ties'.[4] He places adequate emphasis on the social

[1] Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, London, 1950, pp. 181–2.
[2] R. Linton in Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. vii.
[3] A. Kardiner, *Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 99.
[4] In this way he accepts the functionalist approach, in which culture is viewed as increasing the individual power of achievement, an 'initial instalment' of freedom as well

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forces, although here the interaction of the basic personality structure on the cultural institutions has not been worked out satisfactorily. His methodology of culture analysis on the criteria of security systems, sexual controls, points of tension, satisfaction of dependency cravings, social disciplines, fantasy gratification provides possible and feasible 'pegs' for constellations of human behaviour. It also provides a scope for a better understanding of certain universal features of culture, such as dreams and folklore, in a functional way, by establishing their linkage with other cultural constellations.[1] Thus, in this work, many of Kardiner's constructs have been utilized for the explanation of certain aspects of our data, especially in connection with folk and children's tales, dreams, food anxieties, and sexual behaviour. 121

The field methods used in this study are those of the current anthropological repertory depending mainly on hearing and seeing through participant observation, informants, and asking questions of many adults and children on certain problems and to check data given by informants.[2] For information about children, the Kuttabs and the elementary school were available centres together with a 'children's home' organized in the writer's house to which children between seven and twelve years old came on three occasions. It was impossible to stimulate adolescent interest in such a gathering, partly because of their economic responsibilities, and partly because of their excessive shyness and reserve, and this perhaps accounts for the thinness of our observations concerning this age group. Intelligence tests, Stewart Emotional Response, Moral Ideology, Story Completion and Rorschach tests, were administered to children, with the exception of the last test which included adults as well. 124 156 125

A preliminary statement about the choice of certain psychological tests is necessary here to indicate the extent of their relevance to our study. The Moral Ideology, the Emotional Response, and the Story Completion tests are intended to reveal some of the norms and the attitudes which children acquire at various stages of development and some of their

as restricting individual impulses for the purposes of social [illegible]. See Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, London, 1947, p. 31. Freud has emphasized the inhibitory and restrictive forces of culture (Super-Ego). See his book *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[1] For criticisms of the Kardiner-Linton approach see S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 403–8; Henry Ozanne, 'Synthesis in Social Sciences', in *Sociometry*, Vol. VIII, 1945, pp. 608–15, where he maintains that Kardiner's interpretations of the primitive cultures studied, though feasible and meaningful, are only possible explanations and are not necessarily ones arising from the material concerned. As a psychologist he, like some anthropologists, objects to the superimposition of psychological categories, conceptualized in terms of the individual, on sociology, which conceptualizes in terms of the group. See also L. M. Hanks in his review of Kardiner, 'The Individual and His Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. XII, 1940, p. 475, where he emphasizes the importance of behaviour and attitudes falling outside the range defined by institutional behaviour.

[2] For an assessment of my informants, see Appendix I. See also Audrey T. Richards, 'The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett, London, 1939.

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and service programmes as an excellent way of integrating the fields of both applied and theoretical Anthropology.[1] This constraint and fear of divulging personal information could be also attributed to the vulnerability of the villagers' ego-structure, to which we shall refer later.[2] 123 156

What relevance have such assumptions and approach to a study in education? A great part of the answer to such a question must be obvious by now. If education, in its broadest sense, is the process of transmitting the cultural contents, values, attitudes, and the body of technical and social experience from one generation to another, surely the sociological approach is of the greatest value in educational research and educational policies. As Sir Fred Clarke expressed it, culture is the whole life-medium, and not the background with which education is concerned.[3] Formal educational institutions, from schools to universities, are only one transmissive agent of any nation's 'way of life'. Our approach does not preclude the assumption that they are amongst the most efficient means of such transmission or that they are also a potent force in effecting social change. Here we are mainly concerned with education as the means of cultural continuity, of building social solidarity and cohesion. It is probably because of uncritical faith in schools and other formal educational institutions that this transmissive role of education has been ignored. This is vaguely felt when some educationists go to the extreme and advocate leaving children absolutely free for the development of their peculiarities of interest and behaviour. Such are rightly designated as cranks. Apart from those who entertain the ideas of Rousseau's Emile, 'we are well aware that children learn their patterns of social behaviour, their ideas on family life and earning a living, their value systems in relation to social and economic life, far more extensively and intensively outside school than inside'.[4] Society thus keeps itself as a going concern by educating its individuals to its established and time-tested ways of believing, feeling, thinking, and reacting for purposes of social action.[5] 121

Looking at education from this viewpoint may perhaps be disheartening to those educational planners and administrators who are anxious to go

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Introduction, p. xv

[2] Differences between cultures are also reflected in the varying ease with which field workers could procure life-histories. This point was brought to my attention by Cora du Bois who mentioned to me the striking difference in this connection between the flow of the Navaho and the constraint of the Alorese. Of course, my informants, being related to me, would not have accepted money, but perhaps other services. In such a community, people would not accept financial recompense for information given to one from the village itself. In case of an outsider, such payment might be a good incentive in a community which jealously guards against the divulging of personal and family privacies. For motivation of informants see S. F. Nadel, 'The Interview in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett. [129]

[3] Sir Fred Clarke, *Freedom in the Educative Society*, London, 1948.

[4] Paper read by M. Read before the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Edinburgh, August, 1951.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, New York, 1949, p. 188.

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121 ahead with the job, but, as Karl Mannheim repeatedly emphasized, 'no educational activity or research is adequate in the present stage of consciousness unless it is conceived in terms of sociology of education'. 'Society blindness' or lack of 'social awareness' may lead to totalitarianism, or at least to educational malaise and wishful thinking.[1]

This sociological approach to education has stimulated few studies for the evaluation of educational systems and policies as a function of a certain social order. In his *Education and Social Change* Sir Fred Clarke has shown that, in England, although many formulations about educational policy are consistently adopted in practice, they are yet less explicitly recognized in theory. Such policies and practices taken for granted are nonetheless potent in shaping the trends of English education, and his book consists of an analysis of the social and historical determinants of the educational system. He also made a plea for examining the various types of educational institutions and for analysing the extent to which they have reflected certain characteristics of English life.[2]

For the United States, the book entitled *Who Shall be Educated?* is an example of a sociological approach to the function of the public school system in the American society. It shows how only partly true is the Americans' faith that their education system provides everybody with an equal chance to the realization of the 'American dream'. The authors, on the basis of their sociological findings, maintain that the American educational institutions cannot be satisfactorily explained by such labels as the democratic spirit, the American Constitution, or equality of educational opportunities, but must be examined in the light of the status system which operates in the lives of American children. The freedom of educators and administrators who conceive of the educational system as serving democratic purposes is hedged about by certain irreducible stubborn facts about human beings, social institutions and the spheres of valuations within them.[3] After describing some case studies of children, the authors observe that 'even at the early age of ten or twelve, these children all were travelling different paths of life. The school, with its common life, brought most of them together and gave them a common experience and a common literacy. But, as Miss Crane (their teacher) knew, the prescribed social lines of the community fell upon them and even influenced their learning in school. What a given child learned was not in Miss Crane's power to determine. She could try to teach them all the same things, but they would not learn the same things.'[4]

In the light of such facts, the authors conclude that it is desirable to gear the selecting machinery of educational institutions to the demands and capacity of the social structure. If too few people are selected and

[1] K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, London, 1943.
[2] Sir Fred Clarke, *Education and Social Change—An English Interpretation*, London, 1940.
[3] By W. Lloyd Warner, Robert Havighurst and Martin B. Loeb, London, 1946.
[4] W. Lloyd Warner *et al.*, op cit., p. 15.

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promoted through the educational system, the upper levels will be filled through other agencies and perhaps filled with people not properly trained. If too many are selected and pushed up, competition will become fierce for the higher jobs; some people will have to accept jobs below the level for which they are trained, and will consequently become frustrated and cynical. The authors assert: 'We need to see more clearly that various sub-groups in our society can aim at different goals and that it is not necessary for everyone to shoot for the top.' A certain amount of social mobility seems necessary to maintain cohesion; a large measure of it would spell social instability and too little would give rise to dissatisfaction.[1]

A more functional approach has been adopted in a project carried out by the American Youth Council in connection with the Negroes in the United States. The project has centred around the question 'How does the fact of being born a Negro affect the developing personality of a boy or a girl?' In this manner the writers attempted to show the relation between the home environment and the school. We cannot review the findings of these studies here.[2] It is only relevant to refer to them as another example of the increasing awareness to the importance of sociological research for programmes of educational reconstruction.

With these assumptions of theory and methods of research, this study has been written with the transmissive function of education as the centre around which the village institutions, value-systems, attitudes and aims and methods of 'growing up' are arranged. Education here is considered in its two aspects. The first, the technical, consists in acquiring the skills and techniques which enable the individual to become socially useful and a productive member, contributing to the group wealth and strength. The second aspect, which Kluckhohn calls the regulatory training, is the society's means of reducing as much as possible the individual's 'nuisance value' within the group and of promoting to the maximum social cohesion.[3]

Moreover, studies of this kind would help in evaluating or at least viewing in perspective the national policy in education. What is the function of the modern system of schools and universities in Egyptian society? To what extent are these institutions functionally related to the needs of

[1] It must be noted here that the frame of reference of this book is status and rank and their effect on equality of educational opportunity in the American class-structured society. The same approach has been adopted by Warner and others in their studies in the Yankee City series.

[2] This series contains five volumes:
Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage* (American Council of Education), Washington, 1940.
Franklin Frazier, *Negro Youth at the Crossways*, 1940.
Charles Johnson, *Growing Up in the Black Belt*, 1941.
Lloyd Warner, Buford Junker and Walter Adams, *Colour and Human Nature*, 1941.
Robert Sutherland, *Colour, Class and Personality*, 1942.

[3] The distinction between these two aspects of education is made by Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, p. 190. A similar distinction is also made by M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*.

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[21] cultural continuity and social change? How can modern schooling be organized to promote economic productivity? Does the national system of education operate within the traditional value system and social sanctions, and if not what does it offer instead? Of course, these issues cannot be answered in this book, for we are mainly concerned with the educative process of the traditional pattern in a community which is hardly influenced by modern schooling.

In summary we may say that this is an attempt to study childhood in an [23] Egyptian village community. Children are not only observed in school or classroom, but also in their everyday life within the social group in which they live, work, play, and move. As far as is known to the writer there have been no studies of this kind, except a few autobiographies written by some eminent writers.[1] Such autobiographies, however, must be regarded, if to be made use of in sociological studies, in the light of two main reservations. The first is the therapeutic manipulation of the writer's memory for certain experiences, and the second is the requirements of literary style.[2]

[1] See, for example, Taha Hussein, *al Ayyam* (in Arabic), translated into English by E. H. Paxton, *An Egyptian Childhood*, London, 1932. Ahmad Amoun, *Hayati* (*My Life*), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic). Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story*, London, 1946.

[2] See Margaret Mead, 'Research on Primitive Children', in L. Carmichael, *Manual of Child Psychology*, New York, 1946, pp. 694-5.

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Chapter One

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

THE natural resources, methods of production, means of livelihood and property system of any community provide a tangible mechanism which regulates and gives stability to the relations between its members in accordance with the value system governing that culture.[1] In Silwa, the village community under study, agriculture is the basic activity of the great majority of the population.

According to the 1947 Census the distribution of occupations in Silwa is as follows:[2]

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*
Farmers	1088	1451
Industrial workers	47	84
Masons	42	0
Transport	36	0
Trade	69	1
Personal servants	10	387
Servants in Govt. offices and other social services	78	.
Unproductive and undefined jobs	272	86
Unemployed	292	317
TOTAL: 4457	2130	2327

Taking this table as a criterion for village occupations, it is clear that more than 60 per cent of the total population are engaged in agriculture. Yet the official census does not define its categories of occupation, and is

[1] Ernest Beaglehole, *Property, A Study in Social Psychology*, London, 1931.
[2] *Population Census, 1947* (Book I, Province of Aswan), Government Press, Cairo, 1951, p. 25.

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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [994] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [461]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertilizer he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two baskefuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in *Silwa*, see Appendix III.

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Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 32-3.

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Chapter Three

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

A STUDY of the village community cannot ignore an analysis of the process of social change and its by-products. Unlike a primitive tribe, the village community is an integral part of a larger whole—the nation. One of the contributions of modern sociology is the distinction between community and state or society as constituting 'distinct categories of integrative forces'. The integrative forces of the community are based on more spontaneous, natural, and direct relations binding people who are of the same kin; whereas society is more artificial, more indirect, and more deliberate in its relations, maintaining its unity and cohesion with more conscious effort. The social heritage of the community is mainly local, tied up with its habitat; thus, usually, community and locality are almost synonymous.[1]

Such distinction has also been made between genuine and spurious culture, or between folk culture and modern civilization. In the analysis of Silwa community and social change, the concept of folk society is to be adopted as a useful one. Robert Redfield has successfully introduced this term to suggest the inclusion of 'peasant and rustic peoples who are not wholly independent of cities'.[2] Hence, it is necessary to project folk life in Silwa, and the processes of social change, against the larger framework of culture change in the Egyptian society.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state has envisaged the modernization of Egypt mainly in terms of Western civilization, the impact of which has been steadily increasing since the French expedition of 1798. It was through the efforts of the French scholars and Napoleon's reforms that Egypt started to interest itself in Western civilization. The Western way of life was greatly admired by Mohammad Ali, who ascended to power in 1805, and whose ambitious plans to build up a modern state led him to imitate Europe as widely as possible.

[1] This distinction is based on S. F. Nadel's article on 'Nupe State and Community', in *Africa*, Vol. VIII, 1935.

[2] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, footnote, p. 293.

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military defeat meant the ousting of one ruling power by another.[1] Although it is these rulers who have engaged the main interest of historians, it is the habits and traditions of the common folk that have, in fact, been the ultimate forces determining the general run of Egyptian life. What Gruening wrote of Mexico, quoted by Redfield, is equally applicable to the situation in Egypt. 'In few countries is political history less significant than in Mexico, yet its historiographies are pre-eminently political.' Redfield continues: 'The formal institutions, the explicit statement of programme or policy, the bulk of contemporary documents, lie remote from the ways of the masses and record their history almost not at all. The world of the cultivated classes who alone are articulate and alone communicate freely with us, is a world apart from that of the folk.'[2]

Only to a very small extent has Silwa been affected by the forces mentioned earlier. It still preserves its folk culture as the basis of its community life. The village is a homogeneous community in the threefold implication of the term. It is homogeneous to the extent that the villagers belong, or at least consider themselves to belong, to one blood group, engaging in the same kind of work, and, moreover, characterized by slow rate of social change.[3]

The question of social change exists, however, in terms of 'setting and background', and not by itself. 'This is why a discussion of change in culture has meaning only as part of the problem of cultural stability. Both terms are relative and dependent on one another.'[4]

In the process of social change examined in Yucatan, Redfield maintains that the life of primitive peoples can be contrasted with the way of life characterizing civilization in modern urban centres. He maintains that the change is one from a relatively immobile, homogeneous society in which relationships are personal, controls familial, sanctions sacred, with a well-integrated culture, to one tending to have opposite characteristics. In short, organization, individualization, and secularization are causally interrelated with isolation, integration, and homogeneity. In Yucatan, the

[1] Gibb and Bowen say that during the Ottoman rule of the Arab Provinces, and even before that, governors and governed had little effect on each other. 'The explanation is to be found in the very lack of a complex, all-embracing political organization. . . . We may visualise Moslem society as composed of two co-existing groups, the relations between which were for the most part formal and superficial. One group formed the governing class of soldiers and officials, the other the governed class of merchants, artisans and cultivators. Each was organized internally on independent lines and neither group interfered with the organization of the other in normal circumstances.' *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 209.

[2] Quoted by R. Redfield, *Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village*, p. 1: 'In Egypt at present, the new social order is deliberately attempting to bridge the gap between these two social strata. Many of the new legislations aim at minimizing disparities between citizens and at providing equal opportunities for all.'

[3] See Margaret Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory', in *Social Structure*, p. 81.

[4] Melville J. Herskovits, 'The Processes of Cultural Change', in *Science of Man*, p. 144.

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community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being precocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 130–1.

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Chapter Six

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

In this chapter it is intended to outline the procedures and methods that are adopted in this community to inculcate the norms that transform the child, who is relatively peripheral, into the adult who is the central link in village social life. The transition can be considered, as Fortes puts it, as one 'from an economically passive burden into a producer, from a biological unit into a social personality, irretrievably cast in the habits, disposition, and notions characteristic of his culture'.[1] Fortes has also provided the writer with certain insight in evaluating the learning process as a by-product of the cultural routine, a phenomenon which obtains in the village community. It is obvious that in Silwa the education of children is not surrounded, as in some primitive societies, with ceremonies of initiation, elaborate ritual, or narration of totemic myths. Learning accrues mainly through children's observing, imitating and assisting their adults in their everyday activities. For the villagers express the educational process through emphasizing life and time as the most important educational agencies which mould and influence the character, and provide the experience. The difference between an adult and a child is, on the whole, quantitative rather than qualitative. The former knows and thus conforms to the cultural norms, while the latter does not. The commonly used word is not the classical word 'tifl' (infant) but another word which is also classical but literally means 'ignorant' (jahil)—and thus identifies ignorance with childhood. It is because of this ignorance of expected skills, norms and attitudes that the children are considered inferior to the adult, and the younger as subservient to the elder.

Here socialization is to include its two aspects of technical training and cultural or regulatory training.[2] In Chapter I it was shown how a boy or a girl is progressively introduced to the economic pursuits of adults, and what skills were expected of them at successive stages of their growth. It was also emphasized how the child was expected to take over from his

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 6.
[2] See Introduction.

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father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

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Chapter Ten

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

It has been pointed out by some anthropologists that in homogeneous primitive societies, the attention is focused more on the desirability of learning over against the desirability of teaching.[1] As the cultural alternatives are so limited in such communities, the individual finds himself learning the accepted skills, habits and attitudes which everyone else agrees that he would wish to learn. The desirability of learning the socially acceptable modes of living is contrasted, on the whole, with modern societies where individuals are taught various things on which there is no consensus of agreement that everyone has a desire to know. This distinction between folk and modern societies reflected in the different methods of learning and teaching is, of course, not an absolute distinction. For instance, in folk communities teaching does take place, e.g. in certain ceremonies, in the constant corrections and admonitions to children, and so on; and learning does take place in modern societies in the family and group situations.

In folk communities in general, the educative process, whether through learning or teaching, is coterminous with life, and none of its situations is deliberately singled out or isolated for drill of special training.[2] In Silwa the popular saying tends to confirm that the desire to learn is preferable to the need of being taught: 'If the boy does not learn, time will teach him the hard way.' This is also in line with the traditions of Moslem society, where people have been expected to seek knowledge as 'knowledge does not seek people'. Whether in search of special skills or religious enlightenment, the master did not go seeking pupils, but rather the converse. In the Arabic language the word for pupil or student (talib) literally means 'the searcher', he who requests and requires knowledge.

It should also be pointed out here that folk life in Silwa has been relatively independent of the influence of the written word, and it has been affected by it only through a small number of people who were considered

[1] Margaret Mead, 'Our Educational Emphases in Primitive Perspective', in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 634.
[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 27.

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Chapter Twelve

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

THE preceding chapters represent a study of indigenous education in the village community of Silwa against a full portrait of the community life and organization. While it would be impossible here to gather up all the threads from which the whole survey has been woven, some general observations and conclusions can be made as an expansion of some of the issues already raised.

It must be emphasized here again that the education procedures, content and methods discussed in this work obtain in a relatively homogeneous, isolated community of small landholders. The characteristics and the end-product of these educative measures and child-training practices cannot be generalized without wider research in other areas and provinces having different cultural and economic backgrounds. A particularly relevant type of research would be, for example, in peasant communities of large farms, or in villages where there exists a number of families descended from old aristocratic families. Since large and small farmers may differ in a number of ways that are causally interrelated and self-consistent, one would expect that such differences would have their reflections in some aspects of children's education.[1]

Another general observation emerging from our functional approach is connected with the oft-heard criticisms of the irrationality of certain social institutions and customs in rural Egypt. Many social thinkers and reformers in Egypt have condemned the elaborate and expensive celebrations of circumcision, weddings, and funerals as pitfalls through which the conservative peasant falls into debt. The extended family has also been described as an institution that causes some of its members to shirk responsibility and become indolent.[2] It is apparent that these critics

[1] For sociological formulations concerning the interrelationships of the family, farm economics and kinship amongst a small farm population, see Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 1940. See also Julian H. Stewart, *Area Research*, pp. 123–4.

[2] A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya*. Also L. K. Tao, 'Some Chinese Characteristics in the Light of Chinese Family', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934.

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psychological factor. Professor Read has commented on scientists trained in the fields of agriculture, medicine, or economics, and brought up with great faith in anything labelled scientific, who do not easily realize that the peasant has a sense of security in his very insecurity. She further maintains 'that insecurity is the thing he knows, and he understands it in so far as he has always lived with it and adjusted his practices and his ideas in relation to it'.[1]

These remarks about some of the traditional ways of life in the village are only explanations of certain social facts and imply no value judgment. As Nadel maintains, the social enquirer at some stage in his analysis inevitably turns into a social philosopher and 'must posit absolute aims or purposes, and some self-reliant worthwhileness of actions, since without these assumptions his subject matter simply makes no sense'.[2] We believe that change there can be, and ought to be. But as we have been mainly concerned in this thesis with the analytical and explanatory and not the evaluative categories of enquiry, there is no point in dwelling on the latter here.

This study provokes also a comment concerning the generalization made about the nature of the face-to-face relations in a simple society and the value concepts attached to them. Some sociologists have maintained that, because of the integration of such societies, personal relations are smooth and intimate, and perhaps attractive, contrasted with the discontents of civilization and its disorganizing forces.[3] This seems to be another type of generalization similar to that refuted by anthropologists with regard to the groupistic and individualistic nature of behaviour amongst primitive and peasant societies.

In spite of his emphasis on the group behaviour of the Arab fellaheen, and on the importance of appealing to the whole community, Tannous also mentions incidents of rivalry, conflict, and competition among them.[4] In this study we have noted how the constituent social units of this community give rise to tendencies of conflict and rivalry. It has been shown how the susceptibility to friction in this community's culture finds in the early stimulation of sibling rivalry one of its supporting forces. Both solidarity and friction are cultural expectations among siblings, and this reflects itself in the village structure as well as in its structural relations with the rest of the G'afra villages. It seems that the equilibrium of the community is maintained through an elaborate system of social behaviour

[1] Margaret Read, 'Common Grounds in Community Development Experiments', in *Community Development Bulletin*, Vol. II, June 1951.

[2] S. F. Nadel, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[3] See Kimball Young, *Social Psychology*, in his distinction between the characteristics of primary and secondary groups. This is also evident in some of Redfield's writings. See also Lewis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*, London, 1934.

[4] Afif I. Tannous, 'Extension Work among the Arab Fellahin', in *Farmers of the World*, ed. by Edmund de S. Brunner, Irwin T. Sanders and Douglas Ensminger, New York, 1947 ed., pp. 78–100.

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unlimited feeding during infancy hoarded more than two and a half times as many pellets as the other set in the post-frustration tests.[1]

It is possible to infer from the experiment on the rats that the early infantile experiences did not produce the expected trait unconditionally, but their fulfilment was contingent on later environmental conditions. It was hunger in these tests that made one set resort to its early experiences.

With the complexity of human needs and modes, the picture of the foundations of human personality becomes more complicated. But whether one follows the psycho-analytical interpretations or follows the framework of a learning theory based on the conditioning of attitudes and interests of children, one cannot ignore the important trends that are stamped on the individual's personality during his early stages of the process of growing up.

In this book, as stated in the introduction, the main concern has been with the general trends and attributes of personality in terms of predictable behaviour. Detailed case studies of individuals with differently constituted personality types would enrich and clarify such diffused and cross-cultural approach. This would reveal how different types of personalities face, handle, and react to the cultural realities, thus either achieving personal adjustment or becoming maladjusted.[2] No one should claim after reading this work that he knows exactly what to expect from every individual in this community, or knows exactly how every one of its members behaves in every situation. The variety and variability of behaviour and action, with which we were not mainly concerned, must not be neglected. Moreover the subjective element and the 'personal equation' of any writer cannot be completely eliminated in the art of writing in social science.

This work represents, moreover, an attempt to study educational issues in the broadest sense of the term, as a function of the cultural tradition that is transmitted to each generation. The 'transmissive' and 'reproductive' role of education in managing and perpetuating cultural organization, maintaining law and order, ways of sanctioning custom and action, have been discussed in this small community. The writer submits that such a type of research is imperative in a society where there are two educational traditions in juxtaposition: the indigenous and the modern. An objective evaluation of the interrelationship between these two traditions must be based on studies of the local culture, as well as an analysis of the aims and achievements of the modern system of schools.[3]

[1] J. McV. Hunt, 'The Effects of Infant Feeding-Frustration upon Adult Hoarding in the Albino Rat', in *Contemporary Psycho-pathology*, ed. by Silvan S. Tomkins, Harvard University Press, 1947, pp. 425–44.

[2] Karen Horney maintains that the child in coping with the world in its process of growing up develops one of three basic strategies of life: it can move towards people, against them, or from them. *Our Inner Conflicts*, New York, 1945.

[3] A strong plea for studies on childhood and educational institutions on those lines has been advanced by Professor Margaret Read in her inaugural lecture on 'Education and Cultural Tradition'. See also her review of 'Umbundu Kinship and Character' by Gladwyn Murray Childs, in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, 1951.

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HERODOTUS, the father of anthropology, might have been surprised to learn that he was destined to number daughters as well as sons among his intellectual progeny. There can be no doubt, however, that Miss Blackman can justly claim to be reckoned in the direct line of his descendants. In Egypt, her chosen field of research, Herodotus gathered some of his most valuable material. His method too was like hers, namely, to take down the traditional lore of the folk as it came fresh and straight from their lips. The ideal collector of folklore must have a genius for hob-nobbing. From lettered priest to unlettered peasant, all classes of the population must be on gossiping terms with him. Of course, he does not plague them with set questions. Though he keeps a note-book handy he does not flourish it in their faces. He makes it his business not so much to talk as to listen. If the soul of the people is to be revealed they must be overheard as, all unconscious of the presence of the stranger, they fuss and chatter about the affairs of the hour—about the prices of the market and the state of the crops, about yesterday's funeral and to-morrow's wedding, about the donkey's sore back and the sore eyes of the baby. The secret, in short, is to observe unobserved. The folklorist should be capable of melting like a disembodied spirit into the atmosphere of the local life. Or, if he is to be noticeable at all, let it at least be in some character that is strictly consonant with his surroundings. Thus Miss Blackman might possibly have preferred to dispense altogether with her widespread reputation for healing power. Yet to go about trailing clouds of contagious virtue was at all events more in keeping with prevailing notions of normal behaviour than if they had happened, say, to be clouds of exotic scent.

Moreover, not only is anthropology the product of friendly relations, but it likewise produces them. I am thinking more especially of the great kindness which Miss Blackman experienced everywhere at the hands of the leading officials of Egypt. They were evidently in full sympathy with her scientific aims. Unfortunately,

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121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

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largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT

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PREFACE

114 121 THIS book represents but a small portion of the work upon which I have been engaged in Egypt during the last six years. I have spent, on an average, six months annually in the country, living almost entirely among the *fellahīn*. I wish to make it quite clear to my readers that the customs and beliefs, [183] and the general manner of life, described in this book represent those of the peasants only; by the upper classes they have, of course, long been discarded. These customs and beliefs are of great importance and interest in themselves, but the fact that most of them are very ancient makes it still more urgent that they should be adequately studied and recorded. Already my researches have thrown light on points hitherto obscure to students of ancient Egypt; hence this book may, I hope, be not only an addition to anthropological knowledge, but also a contribution to Egyptology.

121 It has been my aim to describe the life of the modern inhabitants of the Nile Valley in the simplest way, avoiding technical language, for my purpose in writing this book has been to interest the general public and present them with a readable and, at the same time, true description of the peasants of Egypt.

114 121 I want to emphasize the fact that though the contents of this book form but a tithe of the information I have collected, yet even so I am only at the beginning of my work. Many years of research still lie ahead of me, for the sources of information are very far from exhausted. When my work is more nearly complete my intention is to produce a large and strictly scientific volume on the beliefs and practices and the social and industrial life of the modern Egyptians.

121 I have endeavoured to be strictly accurate in all my statements. Every custom and belief here dealt with has been most carefully inquired into before I committed it to paper. Nevertheless, those who are experienced field-workers in anthropology know how easy it is to make mistakes and to misunderstand, even after careful investigation, the true inwardness of things. I therefore invite

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121 criticism, and I hope that, if I have misunderstood a point, my Egyptian friends will not hesitate to inform me. I am most anxious that educated Egyptians should recognize the importance of the anthropology and folklore of their country, and my earnest hope is that some of them will be persuaded to take up this study. They surely, if they received the proper training, would be best able to undertake anthropological research among their own people. Before very long I much hope that I may see a flourishing anthropological institute established in Cairo, forming a centre for all such research work, not only in Egypt itself, but in adjacent countries—for who knows how far the influence of ancient Egypt has extended? Some writers in England even postulate an almost world-wide diffusion of Egyptian culture!

I have said that I am only at the beginning of my work. I have not as yet touched Lower Egypt, and my idea is to include in my researches not only the whole of Egypt proper, but the Egyptian Oases and Lower Nubia. I must also undertake a far more intensive study of the provinces which I have already visited, carefully recording all local differences. This of course requires many more years of hard work.

The cult of Muslim sheikhs and Coptic saints is a subject in
[114] which I have particularly interested myself. I have not dealt with it here in detail, as I hope shortly to bring out a book dealing solely with the beliefs, ceremonies, and mythology connected with these venerated persons.

122 I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grants which they have made me during the last four years, and to the Royal Society and the Committee for Anthropology in Oxford for supplementary grants. I owe much also to the encouragement and kindly appreciation of my work which I have received from so many in the University and elsewhere, and to the support afforded me by the special committee appointed by the British Association to promote the furtherance of my researches. To the
000 officials in Egypt and to the Egyptians generally I owe more than I can express. Without the assistance and facilities afforded me by the officials, and the friendliness I have encountered among all classes alike, it would have been quite impossible for me to have accomplished the work I have done. Some of the officials have personally assisted me in my investigations, and the way the

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peasants have welcomed me into their lives has enabled me to get into much closer touch with them than is possible for the ordinary foreigner. I can truly say that the kindness generally that I have received has made the years which I have spent in Egypt the happiest in my life. My desire is that I may be able to continue my work and leave behind me a true record of the many interesting and ancient customs of that most attractive country.

To my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, I am indebted for all the ancient analogies. Not only so, but he has devoted hours to the careful perusal of my manuscript, and moreover has seen this book through the press and made all the indexes, thus enabling me to carry on uninterruptedly my researches in Egypt. If, therefore, the book achieves any success I feel that much of that success will be due to him.

To the Councils of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Folklore Society, to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, to the publishers of *Discovery* (Messrs Benn), and to the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Evening News* I am indebted for permission to include in this book articles of mine that have already appeared in their various journals and papers.

To Professor J. L. Myres I must here express my sincere thanks for reading through all the proofs in collaboration with my brother; and to Mr E. S. Thomas, late of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and now Assistant in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thanks are due for supplying me with better translations of the Arabic charms, etc., than I had before.

All the photographs, I should state, have been taken by myself, with the exception of a few which were taken in 1920 by my friend Mr D. J. V. Forster, of Pembroke College, Oxford, at my request, on the occasions when he was present with me at the ceremonies which they illustrate.

I have purposely suppressed the names of people and villages in nearly every instance as I do not think it would be either desirable or fair (see p. 231) to publish them in a semi-popular book of this kind.

Finally, I should like to point out that with the spread of education the old customs and beliefs are already beginning to die out. It is thus most important that they should be recorded at once, before they suffer complete extinction. I hope, therefore, that my work

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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

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believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 597 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [559] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 121

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114 121 because of my real affection for them, and because I very greatly desire to see their lives improved, especially from the moral standpoint, that I venture to speak openly on a subject in which I am much interested—*i.e.*, how to assure a more wholesome childhood and a higher mental training for the girls, so that they may be better and wiser wives and mothers.

114 181 I have every cause to speak of these people with affection, for their courtesy to me has been unbounded, and I have often marvelled at their patience and cheerfulness, even in the midst of poverty and great privations, which they bear with a courage that enforces respect. Their kindness to each other in times of trouble is most marked, and they will as a rule, however poor they may be, share their scanty fare with one whose position may be even worse than their own. This nobler side of their character shows what a fine people they might become were the women, the chief influence in any community, to receive a better training in childhood, a more suitable education, and to have held up before them a higher ideal of life.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern developments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 121 756 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

114 and Arabic, he has taught for many years in Cairo and paid regular visits to a number of elementary schools in the villages of Upper Egypt. He is thus peculiarly fitted to interpret Egypt to the West, and to describe from within the dusty everyday life of the fellaheen, which ninety-nine Europeans out of a hundred must look upon with distant, alien eyes from the windows of a car or railway-carriage.

114 121 As a social document this book is agreed to have no rival, but its theoretical assumptions and conclusions have proved less generally acceptable. In particular Father Ayrout stresses the changelessness of fellah life, though it would be easy to show that in the century and a half which have passed since Napoleon visited Egypt, there has been a process of economic and technical change in the Egyptian countryside which cannot have left the fellah himself unmoved, and is likely in any case to have far-reaching social effects in the decades to come. I have transgressed the limits of a translator's function in revising a passage at the end of the second chapter in which Father Ayrout argues that over-population cannot prove to be a serious problem in Egypt for at least a generation. If the present social and economic set-up remains unchanged, I am convinced that it will. However, since this book was first written the discovery of high-grade iron ore in the desert near Aswan has changed the whole basis of the argument. It will not be long, one hopes, before the great weight of water sustained by the Aswan Dam can be turned into power serving not only to smelt this iron, but also to feed new factories in the Delta, and in due course provide Egypt with an industrial system as productive as her agriculture. This new wealth will make possible not only a higher standard of life for the fellaheen, but also the provision of those educational facilities without which, as Father Ayrout insists, there can be no real progress in the countryside. The sympathy and goodwill towards the fellaheen which a section of the educated classes in Egypt is already beginning to show will then have wider scope and greater effect. Such changes need not destroy, though they may modify, the organic relationship between the fellah and the soil which Father Ayrout values so much.

It often happens that a whole historical period is summed up in a book written at the moment when that period is

passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for 114
town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope [21]
that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen*.

* * *

Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have 128
made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning.

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *fellâhîn*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
London 1945

nuring, harvesting or irrigation, land-ownership, taxation or the yield per acre. 114

There seemed room, therefore, for a study of the fellah himself which would show him first and foremost as a human being, and consider all these other factors not as he influences them, but as they affect him. This change of perspective should make for a better understanding of Egypt as a whole. 114 121

But the land itself is nothing. Geography may have a place here, but it will be human geography: *homo additus naturae*. And man comes first. Such is human geography as Vidal de la Blache understood it; a science including explanation as well as description, and bordering on psychology and sociology. So without ever separating the tiller of the soil from the earth which sustains and feeds him — for that would be a mutilation — we shall make him the focus of our study.

Our aim then is to portray the fellah's background and the fellah in person; to photograph the very life of these men who humanise the soil of Egypt and in their turn become almost a part of it; and to attempt a description of the contacts which explain their character and personality. 121

To save time, a familiarity with the main facts of the history of Egypt and the outlines of its geography will be taken for granted. A number of excellent works on these subjects have recently been published.

Our enquiry is limited to the fellah in the strict sense of the term, that is to say the farm labourer and small farmer, and does not touch the small craftsmen or the boatmen on the Nile. These are also fellaheen in origin, but their specialisation has given them a different way of life, which deserves a separate study.

We shall speak of the past only when it is necessary, for we are concerned with the fellah as he is today. The present, as we shall soon see, includes the past.

The bibliography, which does not claim to be exhaustive, mentions only those works to which the author has referred for specific points. Egyptian books and periodicals have been preferred where possible, since even if they are not always sufficiently concise or scientific they see Egypt from within, and the information they give, while leaving room for critical discrimination, is at least first-hand.

121 At the same time the author's conclusions are based principally on personal observation over a period of years in various provinces of the Nile Valley. They are based, too, on personal intercourse with people of every rank, and on reflection upon things actually seen and heard.

Thus the work now laid before the public is the result of careful observation and study. This fact has made the writer all the more conscious of its deficiencies.

It is to be hoped, however, that this book will help to raise the question of the fellah in all its seriousness, and so encourage a deeper comprehension of this ancient country.

Here lies the heart of the problem. How are we to explain this physical stability, this changelessness both mental and social, this enduring and extraordinary sameness in a people? 178

The answer lies in the soil. The uniformity of Egyptian art is to be explained by its assimilation to the natural environment. The level ridges and steep cliffs on the edge of the Arabian and the Libyan deserts have produced the long, low, solid outline of the Pharaonic temples, as well as the regular cornice which finishes them. The papyrus, lotus, or reed which grew along the Nile were stylised in the pillars and capitals which we now call papyriform, lotiform, or proto-Doric. 178 121

For ages past an intimate bond, which successive masters of Egypt have used all their powers to draw even tighter, has existed in the Nile Valley, between nature and the human mind.

The fellah stands between the hammer and the anvil, between the soil and the masters of the soil. Yet by the very nature of his life he remains nearer to it than to them; and their hammer-blows beat him yet closer to the ground. This union is so real that the fellah's masters, who are also the owners of the soil, through owning the soil also own the fellah. Thus the fellaheen owe their astonishing uniformity and stability to their close association with an element no less uniform and stable, namely the soil of Egypt. There has grown up between these two a bond which is at once firm and elastic; a balanced and self-sufficient interdependence which no crisis or government can disturb. Here is, in the words of Sully-Prudhomme, "that stern, immemorial wedlock of a land and a people which have made each other". This unbroken contact of people and land has caused a perpetual interplay of action and reaction, of likeness and difference, which strengthens the indissoluble union of the two. On the one hand, we have nature, the physical environment in its broader sense, that is to say the climate and the sunshine and above all the water and loam of the Nile, its flora and its enveloping sands. On the other hand we have man, the social element, that is to say the fellah class, shut in no less by its habits than by its villages; dense, gregarious, but isolated and unorganised, closer to the soil, which it understands, than to the State, of which it knows nothing. 178 121 181

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive.
121

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

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121 The aim of this chapter was not to re-formulate the geography and ethnography of Egypt; for that it would need to be considerably amplified, and illustrated with maps. It was meant to reveal the interdependence of land and people, and so lead to the study of the men who make the land what it is, and are to some extent moulded by it themselves — the fellaheen.

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181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *modwen* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [10].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

provided these show real cordiality and interest and have 183
come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 185
748

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism.

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the *'ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to [538] educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work.

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and 121
spiritual help : material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes : spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism .... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity."

[page 160 is blank]

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

1860. There is also *Al-Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (trans. by 113
Jayakar, and published by Luzac & Co., London, 1906–8), an entertaining zoological lexicon which has embedded in it many curious instances of Moslem folk-medicine.

To confine our attention to Egypt, however, without doubt 114
a great deal could be done by a cultured Egyptian student of 121
folk-customs to collect these age-old, but fast dying, practices. A stranger can seldom hope to obtain, unless after many years' residence among, and constant intercourse with, the natives, that insight into their mentality which is necessary for such a study. Hence the work, here presented in an English garb, should be of no little value to students of folklore, and indeed to all interested in human thought and waywardness, since education, in general, and medical science, in particular, have both made rapid progress of recent years in Egypt, and the Egyptian Government's proposal to establish hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country will do much to eradicate the "cures" of the Old Wives and the village charlatans. So the day is coming, we hope, when the dangerous "remedies" of the modern Nile Dwellers will be no longer practised, but will be relegated to the archives of human error. As such the instances recorded in the present book should have increasing historical value.

The Arabic original is now out of print—in fact the British Museum possesses only Part I—but by this rendering into English of the relevant parts it is hoped that the material will be made more accessible than it otherwise would be. The translation has not been without difficulties. Besides being unvocalized throughout, as well as faulty in style, the Arabic text is none too well printed, and there are several textual errors. Still another difficulty that presents itself to a non-medical reader, is the exact rendering into English of the many medical terms used. Unfortunately the great Dictionary of Medical Terms compiled by Dr. Sharaf,[1] which has proved [113]
very helpful, is only English-Arabic and not *vice versa*. This has necessitated a great deal of search and rectification. It is to be hoped that the medical equivalents are not too glaringly

[1] *An English-Arabic Dictionary of Medicine, Biology and Allied Sciences*, by Dr. Mohammed Sharaf, Cairo, Government Press, 1926 (1st edition).

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ج by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Luzac & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

PART ONE

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

To those who wish to investigate the secret of the folk-medicine of the modern Egyptians, we offer new data which we have obtained after diligent search and careful scrutiny. For it is a secret which those who have it treasure, and take care not to divulge, as if it were the philosopher's stone or the *arcanum* of alchemy. Yet, if it were among the actualities which are corroborated by scientific proof and intellectual evidence, impostors would not hide it behind veils of falsehood, nor gild it for the minds of simple people, who trust in it and consider it a heavenly thing and a divine science. I am referring to a low trade and mean occupation, which charlatans engage in as a means of obtaining spoil and as a source of plunder. Indeed we ought rather to designate them as public robbers because they go round the countryside sometimes in company, sometimes alone, so that no village is free from their mischief, nor does any land escape from their guile. Some of them disguise themselves in the garb of pious derwishes and of learned *ulemas*. Others make the speaking in a foreign language the snare by which they appropriate much of the property of those whose strength has been reduced by diseases, and who are ignorant even to-day of the methods of physicians and of the water-holes of healing.

It is strange that the only thing one can understand from the jargon of these swindlers is that apparently they have devoted their lives to the extraction of the treasures of spiritual sciences. So that, when they say anything, you see simple folk welcoming them and magnifying their value. And they have no excuse for so doing, except that the roots of these follies have for long been planted in their thoughts. They have been scared by the tales of the "old women" whose

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with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium ("influencer") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the "enchanter" to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But "in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

But in 773

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, 121 and since the *Shabshaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were 276 accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have 114 seen that *hashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *hashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khaḍra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shiakha*.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

EPILOGUE

MANY students have forced us to complete the printing of the Second Part of the *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, or "Old Wives' Medicine" by publishing what we have gathered in addition in the interval. Since our researches have been generally concerning the experiences of women in Lower Egypt, it is our hope that, in course of time when we have visited the regions of Upper Egypt, we may gather something of their customs and "cures." We leave this, if Allah pleases, as well as the "prescriptions" of the people of Lower Egypt, to Part III. And Allah is responsible if our work becomes useful and beneficial. 121

(The end of Part II. Part III follows it and begins with "The Congress of Quacks.")[1]

[1] [This Third Part, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was never published, and if ever finished, its present existence is unknown. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The little collection which I herewith publish, doubtless makes known for the first time, a considerable series of songs of the peasants of Upper Egypt; for, as far as I know, there has, hitherto, been printed here and there, only an occasional song, for the most part of no particular content. 114

Although I hope that my book may also furnish material scientifically available, yet this has not been the motive for its publication. It is not intended as a book for scholars. I trust its perusal may be a pleasure to all travelers on the Nile, and to those who may be preparing themselves for the journey thither, as well as to any others who, upon their return home, would gladly be again reminded of the country and the people. Moreover, it may, perhaps, help all such to learn somewhat better how our brown friends think and feel, than it is possible to do by the mere reading of descriptions. For here the people themselves speak, and in words which were not calculated for their effect upon Europeans. Indeed, I think many will be pleasantly surprised by these songs. Of course they are of unequal merit, but I 114 114 121

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"ara (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
121 all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIRST, I should like to express my thanks to my father and mother in Silwa who have patiently endured sacrifices for my education. To them I dedicate this book, and to the people of Silwa who, all the time the study was in progress, were wondering about the purpose of this work.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Prof. Margaret Read, who on all occasions has provided me with sound guidance and valuable advice. Without her keen insight and critical suggestions I would have been unable to see the 'wood'; and would have been lost among the 'trees'.

I should like also to express my gratitude to all those teachers whose ideas and suggestions, whether directly or indirectly, have influenced me in writing this book, especially the late Prof. Mannheim, Prof. Lauwerys, Prof. Fortes, and Prof. Sprott.

Last, but not least, I should like to pay tribute to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York) without whose generous aid the manuscript could not have been published. To the members of its Board, for their encouragement, I am extremely grateful.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 criticism, and I hope that, if I have misunderstood a point, my Egyptian friends will not hesitate to inform me. I am most anxious that educated Egyptians should recognize the importance of the anthropology and folklore of their country, and my earnest hope is that some of them will be persuaded to take up this study. They surely, if they received the proper training, would be best able to undertake anthropological research among their own people. Before very long I much hope that I may see a flourishing anthropological institute established in Cairo, forming a centre for all such research work, not only in Egypt itself, but in adjacent countries—for who knows how far the influence of ancient Egypt has extended? Some writers in England even postulate an almost world-wide diffusion of Egyptian culture!

I have said that I am only at the beginning of my work. I have not as yet touched Lower Egypt, and my idea is to include in my researches not only the whole of Egypt proper, but the Egyptian Oases and Lower Nubia. I must also undertake a far more intensive study of the provinces which I have already visited, carefully recording all local differences. This of course requires many more years of hard work.

The cult of Muslim sheikhs and Coptic saints is a subject in which I have particularly interested myself. I have not dealt with [114] it here in detail, as I hope shortly to bring out a book dealing solely with the beliefs, ceremonies, and mythology connected with these venerated persons.

● 122 I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grants which they have made me during the last four years, and to the Royal Society and the Committee for Anthropology in Oxford for supplementary grants. I owe much also to the encouragement and kindly appreciation of my work which I have received from so many in the University and elsewhere, and to the support afforded me by the special committee appointed by the British Association to promote the furtherance of my researches. To the 000 officials in Egypt and to the Egyptians generally I owe more than I can express. Without the assistance and facilities afforded me by the officials, and the friendliness I have encountered among all classes alike, it would have been quite impossible for me to have accomplished the work I have done. Some of the officials have personally assisted me in my investigations, and the way the

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE ḲARĪN AND ḲARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *ḳarīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue.

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later.

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study.

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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125 reactions and sentiments for different situations. These tests are also expected to draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape his notice.

The Projective Test of the Rorschach Ink Blots is growing in popularity as a technique in field work especially amongst those anthropologists who are concerned with the relations between culture and personality. The test is intended to reveal 'the basic organization of the personality structure, including the fundamental affective and cognitive features of mental life'.[1] In spite of many difficulties and limitations in applying such a test, some Rorschach researchers, working with anthropologists, have noted that the principles of the test could be applied with some validity in cross-cultural situations.[2]

Our purpose in administering Intelligence tests was not primarily for inter-group comparisons, but mainly to elicit information regarding the mental 'orientation' characteristic of the group. Three types of tests were selected, verbal (Kabbani's test for primary school children), a paper and pencil test (Porteus Maze), and a practical performance test (Alexander's pass-along). The assumption is that the significant differences in the score of these tests would be considered as different adjustment to different test material and situations. This could be legitimately regarded as reflection of specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence. In a study of the effects of culture upon children's thoughts and actions, these data are deemed relevant to our purposes.[3]

124 Our methods lack the sociological depth afforded by the gathering of life histories, and intensive case studies of families and individuals supplementing a more diffused and general study of a greater number of individuals. Resistance was expected and encountered in such attempts, even with my informants as shown in Appendix I. Various reasons can be given for such resistance. They were ill at ease at doing things for research, reluctant to engage in an activity which might be considered as dangerous gossip, especially when recorded on paper, and might reach official circles. [156] Their attitude is that personal problems should be 'covered' and not 'exposed' to others. Perhaps their interest was not sufficiently stimulated, for they would ask me, 'And what is the use of all this to us?' It became ● 123 obvious to me during my field work that in order to get the full co-operation of the people for such research, it was necessary to be able to help them in their everyday problems. One villager expressed this in a candid way: 'You must now be useful to us as we have been helpful to you.' A similar observation has been made by Oscar Lewis, who advocates, on the basis of his experience in Tepoztlan, the combination of research

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*, New York, 1946 edition, p. ix.
[2] Cora du Bois, *The People of Alor*, University of Minnesota Press, 1944, p. 589.
[3] S. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, pp. 184–97. For a full account of these tests and their application and findings, see Appendices.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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and service programmes as an excellent way of integrating the fields of both applied and theoretical Anthropology.[1] This constraint and fear of divulging personal information could be also attributed to the vulnerability of the villagers' ego-structure, to which we shall refer later.[2] 123 156

What relevance have such assumptions and approach to a study in education? A great part of the answer to such a question must be obvious by now. If education, in its broadest sense, is the process of transmitting the cultural contents, values, attitudes, and the body of technical and social experience from one generation to another, surely the sociological approach is of the greatest value in educational research and educational policies. As Sir Fred Clarke expressed it, culture is the whole life-medium, and not the background with which education is concerned.[3] Formal educational institutions, from schools to universities, are only one transmissive agent of any nation's 'way of life'. Our approach does not preclude the assumption that they are amongst the most efficient means of such transmission or that they are also a potent force in effecting social change. Here we are mainly concerned with education as the means of cultural continuity, of building social solidarity and cohesion. It is probably because of uncritical faith in schools and other formal educational institutions that this transmissive role of education has been ignored. This is vaguely felt when some educationists go to the extreme and advocate leaving children absolutely free for the development of their peculiarities of interest and behaviour. Such are rightly designated as cranks. Apart from those who entertain the ideas of Rousseau's Emile, 'we are well aware that children learn their patterns of social behaviour, their ideas on family life and earning a living, their value systems in relation to social and economic life, far more extensively and intensively outside school than inside'.[4] Society thus keeps itself as a going concern by educating its individuals to its established and time-tested ways of believing, feeling, thinking, and reacting for purposes of social action.[5] 121

Looking at education from this viewpoint may perhaps be disheartening to those educational planners and administrators who are anxious to go

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Introduction, p. xv

[2] Differences between cultures are also reflected in the varying ease with which field workers could procure life-histories. This point was brought to my attention by Cora du Bois who mentioned to me the striking difference in this connection between the flow of the Navaho and the constraint of the Alorese. Of course, my informants, being related to me, would not have accepted money, but perhaps other services. In such a community, people would not accept financial recompense for information given to one from the village itself. In case of an outsider, such payment might be a good incentive in a community which jealously guards against the divulging of personal and family privacies. For motivation of informants see S. F. Nadel, 'The Interview in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett. [129]

[3] Sir Fred Clarke, *Freedom in the Educative Society*, London, 1948.

[4] Paper read by M. Read before the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Edinburgh, August, 1951.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, New York, 1949, p. 188.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

121 cultural continuity and social change? How can modern schooling be organized to promote economic productivity? Does the national system of education operate within the traditional value system and social sanctions, and if not what does it offer instead? Of course, these issues cannot be answered in this book, for we are mainly concerned with the educative process of the traditional pattern in a community which is hardly influenced by modern schooling.

In summary we may say that this is an attempt to study childhood in an [123] Egyptian village community. Children are not only observed in school or classroom, but also in their everyday life within the social group in which they live, work, play, and move. As far as is known to the writer there have been no studies of this kind, except a few autobiographies written by some eminent writers.[1] Such autobiographies, however, must be regarded, if to be made use of in sociological studies, in the light of two main reservations. The first is the therapeutic manipulation of the writer's memory for certain experiences, and the second is the requirements of literary style.[2]

[1] See, for example, Taha Hussain, *al Ayyam* (in Arabic), translated into English by E. H. Paxton, *An Egyptian Childhood*, London, 1932. Ahmed Ameen, *Hayati* (*My Life*), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic). Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story*, London, 1946.

[2] See Margaret Mead, 'Research on Primitive Children', in L. Carmichael, *Manual of Child Psychology*, New York, 1946, pp. 694–5.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [84A]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḳṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh.

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated.

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 264.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
778 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
● 123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
764 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
775 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion.

Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her.

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of E [152] women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward [302] me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on E the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite [123] of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared [515] the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in E the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured hand- [292] kerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined —such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they E would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the [302] women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

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[057]
[291]

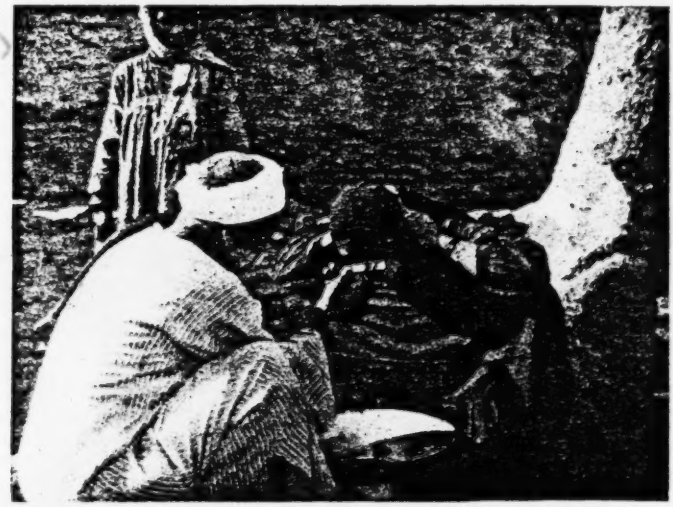

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

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[057]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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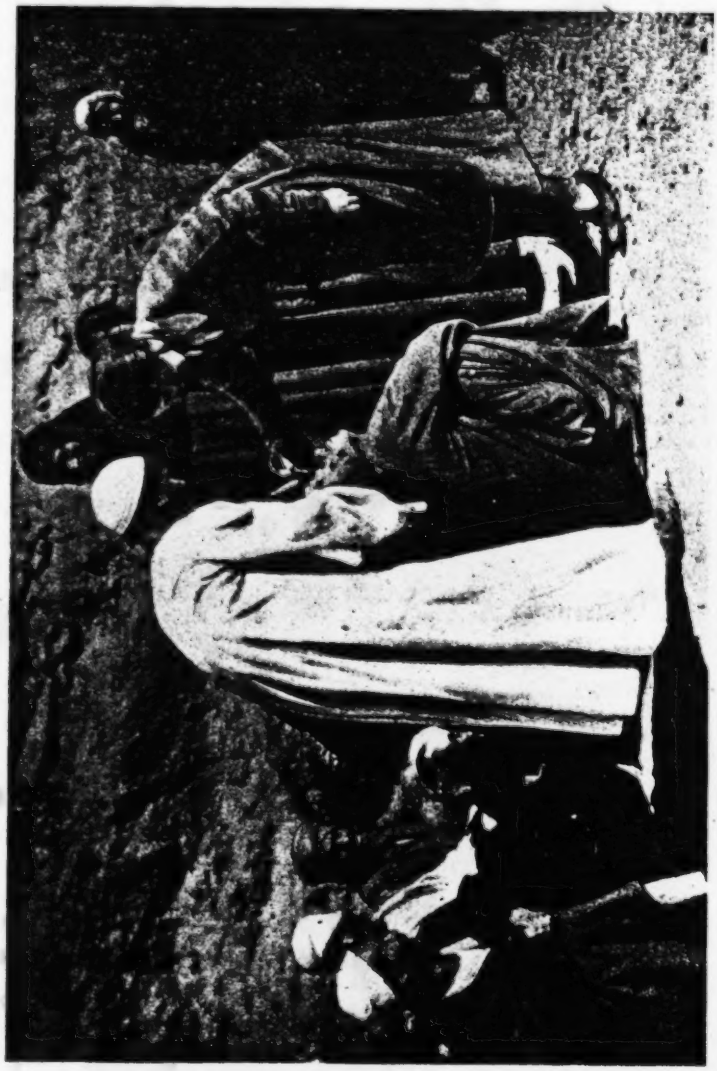

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FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

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case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791 with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789 tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755 of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753 by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123 and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593 one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152 evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776 him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152 come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158 mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

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At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756 they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755 of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken
186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author
[702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants,
123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate
186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation
579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered
186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried
682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the
609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the
579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (44).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the
577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

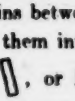
113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those
[103] of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully
[101] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *akrān* (pl. of *karīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *akrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *karīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *akrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *akrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *karīn*, or her *karīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *karīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *karīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *karīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus—  , or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *akrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *akrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *karīn* marries the *karīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *karīn* or her *karīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David- for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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forces, although here the interaction of the basic personality structure on the cultural institutions has not been worked out satisfactorily. His methodology of culture analysis on the criteria of security systems, sexual controls, points of tension, satisfaction of dependency cravings, social disciplines, fantasy gratification provides possible and feasible 'pegs' for constellations of human behaviour. It also provides a scope for a better understanding of certain universal features of culture, such as dreams and folklore, in a functional way, by establishing their linkage with other cultural constellations.[1] Thus, in this work, many of Kardiner's constructs have been utilized for the explanation of certain aspects of our data, especially in connection with folk and children's tales, dreams, food anxieties, and sexual behaviour.

The field methods used in this study are those of the current anthropological repertory depending mainly on hearing and seeing through participant observation, informants, and asking questions of many adults and children on certain problems and to check data given by informants.[2] For information about children, the Kuttabs and the elementary school were available centres together with a 'children's hour' organized in the writer's house to which children between seven and twelve years old came on three occasions. It was impossible to stimulate adolescent interest in such a gathering, partly because of their economic responsibilities, and partly because of their excessive shyness and reserve, and this perhaps accounts for the thinness of our observations concerning this age group. Intelligence tests, Stewart Emotional Response, Moral Ideology, Story Completion and Rorschach tests, were administered to children, with the exception of the last test which included adults as well.

A preliminary statement about the choice of certain psychological tests is necessary here to indicate the extent of their relevance to our study. The Moral Ideology, the Emotional Response, and the Story Completion tests are intended to reveal some of the norms and the attitudes which children acquire at various stages of development and some of their

as restricting individual impulses for the purposes of social cohesion. See Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, London, 1947, p. 31. Freud has emphasized the inhibitory and restrictive forces of culture (Super-Ego). See his book *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[1] For criticisms of the Kardiner-Linton approach see S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 403–8; Henry Ozanne, 'Synthesis in Social Sciences', in *Sociometry*, Vol. VIII, 1945, pp. 208–15, where he maintains that Kardiner's interpretations of the primitive cultures studied, though feasible and meaningful, are only possible explanations and are not necessarily ones arising from the material concerned. As a psychologist he, like some anthropologists, objects to the superimposition of psychological categories, conceptualized in terms of the individual, on sociology, which conceptualizes in terms of the group. See also L. M. Hanks in his review of Kardiner, 'The Individual and His Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. XII, 1940, p. 475, where he emphasizes the importance of behaviour and attitudes falling outside the range defined by institutional behaviour.

[2] For an assessment of my informants, see Appendix I. See also Audrey T. Richards, 'The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett, London, 1939.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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125 reactions and sentiments for different situations. These tests are also expected to draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape his notice.

The Projective Test of the Rorschach Ink Blots is growing in popularity as a technique in field work especially amongst those anthropologists who are concerned with the relations between culture and personality. The test is intended to reveal 'the basic organization of the personality structure, including the fundamental affective and cognitive features of mental life'.[1] In spite of many difficulties and limitations in applying such a test, some Rorschach researchers, working with anthropologists, have noted that the principles of the test could be applied with some validity in cross-cultural situations.[2]

Our purpose in administering Intelligence tests was not primarily for inter-group comparisons, but mainly to elicit information regarding the mental 'orientation' characteristic of the group. Three types of tests were selected, verbal (Kabbani's test for primary school children), a paper and pencil test (Porteus Maze), and a practical performance test (Alexander's pass-along). The assumption is that the significant differences in the score of these tests would be considered as different adjustment to different test material and situations. This could be legitimately regarded as reflection of specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence. In a study of the effects of culture upon children's thoughts and actions, these data are deemed relevant to our purposes.[3]

124 Our methods lack the sociological depth afforded by the gathering of life histories, and intensive case studies of families and individuals supplementing a more diffused and general study of a greater number of individuals. Resistance was expected and encountered in such attempts, even with my informants as shown in Appendix I. Various reasons can be given for such resistance. They were ill at ease at doing things for research, reluctant to engage in an activity which might be considered as dangerous gossip, especially when recorded on paper, and might reach official circles. [156] Their attitude is that personal problems should be 'covered' and not 'exposed' to others. Perhaps their interest was not sufficiently stimulated, for they would ask me, 'And what is the use of all this to us?' It became 123 obvious to me during my field work that in order to get the full co-operation of the people for such research, it was necessary to be able to help them in their everyday problems. One villager expressed this in a candid way: 'You must now be useful to us as we have been helpful to you.' A similar observation has been made by Oscar Lewis, who advocates, on the basis of his experience in Tepoztlan, the combination of research

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*, New York, 1946 edition, p. ix.
[2] Cora du Bois, *The People of Alor*, University of Minnesota Press, 1944, p. 589.
[3] S. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, pp. 184–97. For a full account of these tests and their application and findings, see Appendices.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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and service programmes as an excellent way of integrating the fields of both applied and theoretical Anthropology.[1] This constraint and fear of divulging personal information could be also attributed to the vulnerability of the villagers' ego-structure, to which we shall refer later.[2]

What relevance have such assumptions and approach to a study in education? A great part of the answer to such a question must be obvious by now. If education, in its broadest sense, is the process of transmitting the cultural contents, values, attitudes, and the body of technical and social experience from one generation to another, surely the sociological approach is of the greatest value in educational research and educational policies. As Sir Fred Clarke expressed it, culture is the whole life-medium, and not the background with which education is concerned.[3] Formal educational institutions, from schools to universities, are only one transmissive agent of any nation's 'way of life'. Our approach does not preclude the assumption that they are amongst the most efficient means of such transmission or that they are also a potent force in effecting social change. Here we are mainly concerned with education as the means of cultural continuity, of building social solidarity and cohesion. It is probably because of uncritical faith in schools and other formal educational institutions that this transmissive role of education has been ignored. This is vaguely felt when some educationists go to the extreme and advocate leaving children absolutely free for the development of their peculiarities of interest and behaviour. Such are rightly designated as cranks. Apart from those who entertain the ideas of Rousseau's Emile, 'we are well aware that children learn their patterns of social behaviour, their ideas on family life and earning a living, their value systems in relation to social and economic life, far more extensively and intensively outside school than inside'.[4] Society thus keeps itself as a going concern by educating its individuals to its established and time-tested ways of believing, feeling, thinking, and reacting for purposes of social action.[5]

Looking at education from this viewpoint may perhaps be disheartening to those educational planners and administrators who are anxious to go

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Introduction, p. xv.

[2] Differences between cultures are also reflected in the varying ease with which field workers could procure life-histories. This point was brought to my attention by Cora du Bois who mentioned to me the striking difference in this connection between the flow of the Navaho and the constraint of the Alorese. Of course, my informants, being related to me, would not have accepted money, but perhaps other services. In such a community, people would not accept financial recompense for information given to one from the village itself. In case of an outsider, such payment might be a good incentive in a community which jealously guards against the divulging of personal and family privacies. For motivation of informants see S. F. Nadel, 'The Interview in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett.

[3] Sir Fred Clarke, *Freedom in the Educative Society*, London, 1948.

[4] Paper read by M. Read before the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Edinburgh, August, 1951.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, New York, 1949, p. 188.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[P.240 is blank]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few
[217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his
[465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken
[429] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and
124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of
114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken
[516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by
115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers,
[463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE ḲARĪN AND ḲARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (pl. of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *ḳarīn*, or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *ḳarīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— [/\], or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣîr. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my inform-
115 ants was a Būṣîri (man of Abūṣîr), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa''āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa''āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhîm es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old
124 rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All
115 the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either
[104] not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus,
[194] I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasye near Beni-Suëf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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forces, although here the interaction of the basic personality structure on the cultural institutions has not been worked out satisfactorily. His methodology of culture analysis on the criteria of security systems, sexual controls, points of tension, satisfaction of dependency cravings, social disciplines, fantasy gratification provides possible and feasible 'pegs' for constellations of human behaviour. It also provides a scope for a better understanding of certain universal features of culture, such as dreams and folklore, in a functional way, by establishing their linkage with other cultural constellations.[1] Thus, in this work, many of Kardiner's constructs have been utilized for the explanation of certain aspects of our data, especially in connection with folk and children's tales, dreams, food anxieties, and sexual behaviour.

The field methods used in this study are those of the current anthropological repertory depending mainly on hearing and seeing through participant observation, informants, and asking questions of many adults and children on certain problems and to check data given by informants.[2] For information about children, the Kuttabs and the elementary school were available centres together with a 'children's hour' organized in the writer's house to which children between seven and twelve years old came on three occasions. It was impossible to stimulate adolescent interest in such a gathering, partly because of their economic responsibilities, and partly because of their excessive shyness and reserve, and this perhaps accounts for the thinness of our observations concerning this age group. Intelligence tests, Stewart Emotional Response, Moral Ideology, Story Completion and Rorschach tests, were administered to children, with the exception of the last test which included adults as well.

A preliminary statement about the choice of certain psychological tests is necessary here to indicate the extent of their relevance to our study. The Moral Ideology, the Emotional Response, and the Story Completion tests are intended to reveal some of the norms and the attitudes which children acquire at various stages of development and some of their

as restricting individual impulses for the purposes of social action. See Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, London, 1947, p. 31. Freud has emphasized the inhibitory and restrictive forces of culture (Super-Ego). See his book *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[1] For criticisms of the Kardiner-Linton approach see S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 403–8; Henry Ozanne, 'Synthesis in Social Sciences', in *Sociometry*, Vol. VIII, 1945, pp. 208–15, where he maintains that Kardiner's interpretations of the primitive cultures studied, though feasible and meaningful, are only possible explanations and are not necessarily ones arising from the material concerned. As a psychologist he, like some anthropologists, objects to the superimposition of psychological categories, conceptualized in terms of the individual, on sociology, which conceptualizes in terms of the group. See also L. M. Hanks in his review of Kardiner, 'The Individual and His Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. XII, 1940, p. 475, where he emphasizes the importance of behaviour and attitudes falling outside the range defined by institutional behaviour.

[2] For an assessment of my informants, see Appendix I. See also Audrey T. Richards, 'The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett, London, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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125 reactions and sentiments for different situations. These tests are also expected to draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape his notice.

The Projective Test of the Rorschach Ink Blots is growing in popularity as a technique in field work especially amongst those anthropologists who are concerned with the relations between culture and personality. The test is intended to reveal 'the basic organization of the personality structure, including the fundamental affective and cognitive features of mental life'.[1] In spite of many difficulties and limitations in applying such a test, some Rorschach researchers, working with anthropologists, have noted that the principles of the test could be applied with some validity in cross-cultural situations.[2]

Our purpose in administering Intelligence tests was not primarily for inter-group comparisons, but mainly to elicit information regarding the mental 'orientation' characteristic of the group. Three types of tests were selected, verbal (Kabbani's test for primary school children), a paper and pencil test (Porteus Maze), and a practical performance test (Alexander's pass-along). The assumption is that the significant differences in the score of these tests would be considered as different adjustment to different test material and situations. This could be legitimately regarded as reflection of specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence. In a study of the effects of culture upon children's thoughts and actions, these data are deemed relevant to our purposes.[3]

124 Our methods lack the sociological depth afforded by the gathering of life histories, and intensive case studies of families and individuals supplementing a more diffused and general study of a greater number of individuals. Resistance was expected and encountered in such attempts, even with my informants as shown in Appendix I. Various reasons can be given for such resistance. They were ill at ease at doing things for research, reluctant to engage in an activity which might be considered as dangerous gossip, especially when recorded on paper, and might reach official circles. [156] Their attitude is that personal problems should be 'covered' and not 'exposed' to others. Perhaps their interest was not sufficiently stimulated, for they would ask me, 'And what is the use of all this to us?' It became 123 obvious to me during my field work that in order to get the full co-operation of the people for such research, it was necessary to be able to help them in their everyday problems. One villager expressed this in a candid way: 'You must now be useful to us as we have been helpful to you.' A similar observation has been made by Oscar Lewis, who advocates, on the basis of his experience in Tepoztlan, the combination of research

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*, New York, 1946 edition, p. ix.
[2] Cora du Bois, *The People of Alor*, University of Minnesota Press, 1944, p. 589.
[3] S. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, pp. 184-97. For a full account of these tests and their application and findings, see Appendices.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Eight

THE STEWART EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TEST

SAMPLES OF TEST RESPONSES

125 Tests have been recently adopted by some social anthropologists:

1. To provide quick means for collecting useful material in relatively little time.
2. To draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape notice.
3. To be used as an objective check on one's own impressions, especially in the field of culture-personality relationship.
4. To provide means of quantitative analysis.

Tests, however, must be interpreted in their cultural context. Leighton and Kluckhohn assert that tests hold considerable promise in anthropological research, but owing to their present state of imperfection, must be used in conjunction with material obtained by the usual anthropological techniques of observation and interview.[1]

1. The Stewart Emotional Response Test

159 125 This test is a series of questions asking for experiences associated with five emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and shame, one question asking for the best thing that could happen to the child, and another asking for the worst that could happen.[2] After administering the test on twelve children, the responses of the following five children were chosen on the grounds of being the most complete performance. Three boys disclaimed their experience of such emotions, while others gave confused answers.

No girls' responses are recorded here. I found them most frustrating in [156] this respect, except in the Rorschach ink-blots. Young girls were 'giggly'; older ones were shy and [illegible]easy. Their way out was 'I don't know; I am not a man'. They prob[illegible]y refused to co-operate because the tests were first administered on the boys from whom they heard about them. After

[1] D. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *Children of the People*, p. 227.
[2] Ibid., p. 247.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless. [59] [125]

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.) [262]
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them.

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'. [369]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Nine

MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

BAVELAS MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

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[125]

THIS test is designed to ascertain the public official moral ideas of the group. The child is asked for three things that would be considered good for him or for a boy of his age to do; and for the same number of things that would be considered bad to do. The individual responses are taken to indicate not just how the child acts in a given situation, but how he thinks people in general want him to act.[1]

The first part of the test was elicited in this way: 'What could you or a boy of your age do that would be a good thing for which father, the family or the people would praise you? Mention three things.'[2]

A. *Age Nine:*
1. Go on errands for my parents, buying tea and sugar for mother and cigarettes for father.
2. Memorize my assignment of the Koran.
3. I don't know anything else.

B. *Age ten:*
1. To take the cow to the farm and feed it.
2. What else? There is nothing more pleasing to father than this.
3. To lead the blind on the way.

C. *Age thirteen:*
1. To go straight without making trouble with other boys.
2. To fetch water home.
3. Attend to the animals in the field and at home.

D. *Age thirteen:*
1. To attend to his work.
2. Not to beat younger children.
3. To keep quiet and not play, as such conduct pleases his father.

[1] Alex Bavelas, 'A Method for Investigating Individual and Group Ideology', in *Sociometry*, Vol. V, 1942.
[2] The five boys tested here are not the same boys tested previously.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Ten

STORY COMPLETION TEST

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[125]

THE story completion test, composed of nine stories, is based on the pattern of stories devised by Pintner for the assessment of various aspects of the child's personality, e.g. attitude towards authority, moral tendencies, interests, wishful thinking, fears and anxieties.[1] Such aspects of the personality are not only important from the psychological, but also from the sociological viewpoint. The writer considers the use of such tests as relevant material for this study. Some of Pintner's stories were adapted, two were omitted, and story 5 was added. The test was administered in the following way. Every boy was told, 'I am going to start a story, and I want you to complete it in whatever way you like'. The boys were encouraged and occasional prompting was necessary on some points.

The following are the stories:

1. Once there was a boy sitting outside the house. He was not playing with other boys, but was staying all alone by himself. . . . (Why?)[2]
2. One day the parents of this boy got angry with him. . . . (What was it about? What happened? How did it end?)
3. The boy went to fetch water from the Nile on donkey-back. But on the way the water-jars were broken. . . . (What happened afterwards? Who punished him?)
4. In the street the boy was fighting with another boy. A man passed. . . . (What happened then?)
5. The boy saw his younger brother playing with a ball. . . . (What did he do?)
6. This boy had a friend he liked very much. One day he said to him: 'You come with me, and I'll show you something, but you mustn't tell anyone because it's a secret.' . . . (What did he show him? What did they do?)

[1] R. Pintner, 'Four Retests of a Personality Inventory', in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. XXIX, 1938. These tests were pointed out to the writer by Dr. Ramzy of the Institute of Education, Cairo, who used them in his thesis 'An Experiment in Assessing Personality', London, 1948 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

[2] The bracketed questions are examples of the promptings.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX X

7. It was night. The boy was sleeping, and suddenly he woke up screaming. . . . (What made him wake up? What was the matter?) 159
8. One night the boy dreamt he saw the angels during his sleep. They asked him to pray for something he wanted. . . . (What did he pray for?)
9. This boy is growing up. He likes to be a man. . . . (What would he like to do?)

The story completion test was given to seven boys and five of them gave the following satisfactory completions: [125]

A. *Age nine:*

1. He does not play with the other boys because they are older than he is, and he is waiting for a boy of his age to match him in the game.
2. His parents were angry because he returned late after being sent on an errand, and rebuked him for talking to other children on the way.
3. When he breaks the water-jars his mother beats him and deprives him of food.
4. The man beats the two boys who were quarrelling, tells their fathers about this, the fathers will beat their sons.
5. He would not let his younger brother play with the ball, and immediately he sees him playing, he would send him on an errand.
6. I don't know what he said to the other boy.
7. He cried, 'Oh! Father.' He imagined a wolf or a ghost or thieves breaking into the house. He feared the dark and said, 'In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'.
8. He prayed for a good garment and a fez.
9. I don't know.

B. *Age nine:*

1. The boy does not play with the other boys because they usually strike him; they do not speak to him, nor does he speak to them or sit near them. But later on he finds another boy with whom he is on good terms and plays with him.
2. The parents got angry with the son, and hence did not feed him. This was because the boy did not obey his parents' commands, and such disobedience would bring God's anger. The boy had to go to some relatives to get food, but when his parents did not find any boy to run an errand for them, they brought him back to the house, and fed him, and thus they were reconciled.
3. When the boy broke the water-jars he went weeping to his mother, who asked him how this happened. The mother became angry and struck him for his negligence.
4. When the man saw those boys quarrelling, he separated them,

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Twelve

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF INTELLIGENCE TESTING

125

THREE intelligence tests were carried out on the elementary school children in the village. They were: 1. Kabbani Primary School Intelligence Test; 2. Porteus Maze Test; 3. Alexander Pass-along Test. These tests were chosen from those available at the Institute of Education, Cairo, as representing different types of test material.[1] The first test is a verbal one, the other two are of the 'performance test' type, one being paper and pencil, while the other is practical manipulation of blocks of wood. The purpose is to test the children's ability to deal with ideas and symbols as well as their handling of concrete material and solving a practical problem.[2]

The Kabbani test, based on the Ballard Intelligence test, has been standardized on primary school children in Cairo.[3] As the test involves reading and writing it had to be confined to those boys and girls who had sufficiently mastered these skills, and this meant that it could be administered only to the children of the third grade, numbering thirty-one boys and girls.

The Porteus Maze was given to practically all the school children—127 boys and girls. Burt's modifications in administering the test were followed.[4] Only two minor changes were made: the first was that the plan of the maze was explained to the boys and girls as 'paths in a field' instead of 'paths in a garden'; and the second was that the child was asked to enter the field from the right side of the paper instead of the left, as this is more in keeping with the way of writing the Arabic script.

The Pass-along test is composed of pushing cubes of coloured wood on a board to match them with a similar pattern presented on a card. It was

[1] See Introduction.
[2] For the advisability of using a combination of verbal and performance tests see Drever and Collins, *Performance Tests of Intelligence*, Edinburgh, 1946, p. 12.
[3] I. al-Kabbani, *Primary School Intelligence Test*, Cairo, 1939 (Arabic).
[4] Cyril Burt, *Handbook of Tests*, London, 1948, pp. 98–9.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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administered only to eighty-five boys and girls chosen from each of the three grades in alphabetical order, as the administering of this test takes a relatively longer time. 125

The following table represents the frequency distribution of the intelligent quotient of the thirty-one boys and girls according to their scores in the Kabbani test. 153

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	2	4	6
40–49	1	1	2
50–59	6	3	9
60–69	3	4	7
70–79	2	4	6
80–89	1	0	1

The frequency distributions for the Porteus Maze and for the Pass-along tests are:

PORTEUS MAZE

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	0	1
40–49	0	0	0
50–59	3	6	9
60–69	10	19	29
70–79	14	21	35
80–89	16	12	28
90–99	7	2	9
100–109	10	1	11
110–119	1	2	3
120–129	1	0	1
130–139	1	0	1

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Thirteen

REMARKS ON THE RORSCHACH TESTING

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[125]

THE Rorschach ink-blots test was administered to male adults, and to some of the school boys and girls, twenty subjects from each group. The test was administered at the writer's home, always after a friendly chat with the subject. With the first few tests on the school children, it was found that the children attempted to give responses in 'classical Arabic', but this difficulty was soon got over when the children were told that the task had nothing to do with the school. The original idea was to give these records to a Rorschach expert in Egypt, but unfortunately he was prevented by illness from undertaking the task of interpretation. Consequently, the writer took a three-term course on the technique at the Tavistock Clinic, Institute of Human Relations. Thus any failure to give a full account of the results of testing can be attributed to his lack of sufficient experience. The method of scoring and interpretation is mainly based on that of Rorschach himself and also that of Mons.[1]

The interpretation of children's records is not attempted here, but the interpretive significance of the adults' records is given.

The first striking fact about the records is that none of the twenty subjects rejected any of the cards during their performance. The average number of responses totalled twenty-five (the average responses for a sufficiently productive person according to the experience of Rorschach experts is twenty to thirty). Thus from the quantity of their responses one is inclined to infer that the members of this group show on the whole a capacity for productivity and persistence. They try to do their best in performing a task, and do not give up easily.

The proportion between 'whole responses—W' and 'detail responses—D and d' is 14 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. This suggests a tendency to view situations in a practical and concrete manner. In other words the members of the group in their intellectual approach are more concerned with realistic situations than with abstract concepts. Moreover, their pronounced interest in minor details (d and Dd) suggests a tendency

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*. W. Mons, *Principles and Practice of the Rorschach Personality Test*, London, 1950.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Now the plough of Dynastic Egypt was more or less double handled, and if the discoveries in Upper Egypt or Fayum reveal, even through the Greek and the Roman periods, the constance of double handles, there is then no doubt that such a characteristic in the Egyptian plough is obviously very old. Again if we consider another part of the plough, namely the beam, we find that the straight beam figures out in all ancient findings, until curved beam appears suddenly in the Roman period, side by side with the straight beam. This sudden appearance is only confined to Fayum, no evidence known refer to the appearance of the curved beam in Upper Egypt, but it is highly probable that curved beam appeared also in different parts of the Delta. We must notice that the curved beam of Fayum appeared in connection with a double handled plough—a fact which either indicate that that type of beam originated with the double handled principle, or that it originated in association with the single handled plough. In view of the constant appearance of the curved beam with the single handle, not only in contemporaneous Egypt, but also in Southern Palastine, Tripoli [1], Tunisia [2], and in South Arabia [3], we may conclude that the combination of double handles and curved beam of Roman Fayum represent an adjustment of the curved beam incrusion southwards from the Delta. All this discussion means that the roots of the present type V plough are definitly older than prototype of plough type II.

Leser in his studies of the plough has settled down the problem of the curved beam plough. In his steps followed both Winkler and Baumann. Winkler states :

> « Der Krümelpflug weist nun deutlich nach Griechenland und Italien hinüber, dort ist dieser Pflug seit sehr alter Zeit zu Hause. Wenn wir zur Bezeichnung der Griessäule das romanisch Balanga (Latienisch oder italienisch Bilancia) finden, dürfen wir vermuten, dass dieses Wort besonders am Mittelmeerpflug, dem Krumelpflug, gehaftet hat » [1].

[1] See plate 8, drawings of the plough of Palastine and Tripoli based upon information furnished to me by some palastinian and libyan students in the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Cairo.

[2] See plate 8 c, after Baumann.

[3] See plate 8 d, drawn upon photograph 37 in Helfritz (see references under Helfritz).

[1] Winkler, p. 163.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PREFACE

peasants have welcomed me into their lives has enabled me to get into much closer touch with them than is possible for the ordinary foreigner. I can truly say that the kindness generally that I have received has made the years which I have spent in Egypt the happiest in my life. My desire is that I may be able to continue my work and leave behind me a true record of the many interesting and ancient customs of that most attractive country.

To my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, I am indebted for all the ancient analogies. Not only so, but he has devoted hours to the careful perusal of my manuscript, and moreover has seen this book through the press and made all the indexes, thus enabling me to carry on uninterruptedly my researches in Egypt. If, therefore, the book achieves any success I feel that much of that success will be due to him.

To the Councils of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Folklore Society, to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, to the publishers of *Discovery* (Messrs Benn), and to the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Evening News* I am indebted for permission to include in this book articles of mine that have already appeared in their various journals and papers.

To Professor J. L. Myres I must here express my sincere thanks for reading through all the proofs in collaboration with my brother; and to Mr E. S. Thomas, late of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and now Assistant in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thanks are due for supplying me with better translations of the Arabic charms, etc., than I had before.

All the photographs, I should state, have been taken by myself, with the exception of a few which were taken in 1920 by my friend Mr D. J. V. Forster, of Pembroke College, Oxford, at my request, on the occasions when he was present with me at the ceremonies which they illustrate.

I have purposely suppressed the names of people and villages in nearly every instance as I do not think it would be either desirable or fair (see p. 231) to publish them in a semi-popular book of this kind.

Finally, I should like to point out that with the spread of education the old customs and beliefs are already beginning to die out. It is thus most important that they should be recorded at once, before they suffer complete extinction. I hope, therefore, that my work

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for 114
town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope [21]
that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen*.

* * *

Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have 128
made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning.

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *fellâhîn*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
London 1945

inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ج by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Luzac & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128 ●

The Elements of the Zar.

755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

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121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the ● 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101 dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241 quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868 young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312 the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177 though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121 ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241 with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131 without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423 is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241 begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312 from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423 which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427] into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [578] landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [665]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [788] [103] [131]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbiye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

Dināre 'ālet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarrag 'al-bagūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

539x 852 304

40. 41.

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii. 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
130 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes
121 these classes less stable, but more progressive.

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

241 132 Thus at High Nile (August to October) the fields are no longer flooded, but only irrigated, and bear the crops called *nili*. When the flood is over, and the level of the flood is falling (November to April), the land, being still moist, receives sufficient water for the winter crop (*shetwi*). At Low Nile (April to July) the reservoirs are gradually emptied to provide water for ripening a third crop, called the summer crop (*sêfi*).

132 134 To be fruitful, the land needs not only water, but also air. The sun, by the vertical cracks its summer heat makes in the level soil, plays its part in reviving the fallow land. It removes excess salt and mellows the soil by letting the air penetrate deeply into the earth, so that the land is dehydrated and renewed (').

We thus see the Nile, helped by the sun, already at work preparing and cultivating the land, and so determining the fellah's physical environment, the living Egypt.

133 In fact, wherever the Nile does not penetrate, either from above or below, the desert begins abruptly, without any intermediate zone. The conventional colourings of maps, which show Egypt as a thin green strip across a great dun-coloured space, correspond exactly with reality. From the top of the Great Pyramid near Cairo, or from the hills of the Sa'îd (*), one is struck, whichever way one looks, by the clear line of demarcation where human labour and habitation stop short. Between the cliffs of the Libyan and Arabian deserts lies a level valley, 650 miles in length. Its width is less than a mile at Wadi-Halfa (*), 3 miles at Edfu, about 8 between Luxor and Assiut, where it narrows again, and 15 at Beni-Suef, whence a branch goes off westward to the Fayûm. From Cairo it spreads out fanwise to form a coast-line of 160 miles at the north of the Delta. In all there are some 12,000 square miles of good land, lying in the midst of about 400,000 square miles of barren sand. This 3 % of the whole area represents the living and productive Egypt.

Its shape is given to it by the Nile. It looks like a giant lotus, whose roots, the White and the Blue Nile, are planted in the heart of Africa, in the high mountains of Abyssinia and the great lakes of the Congo. From Khartoum the sap rises along a single stem, which pushes into Egypt at Wadi-Halfa, shows signs of green at Aswan, bears a single leaf

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([13]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([14]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([15]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

Chapter IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

417 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[-92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
46 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

48: In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

'Ēb 'alēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

×539
527
821
[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband 'Ali, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

'Ali, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast; for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl 'Ali u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-'aginha 'uddamha.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of ●133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

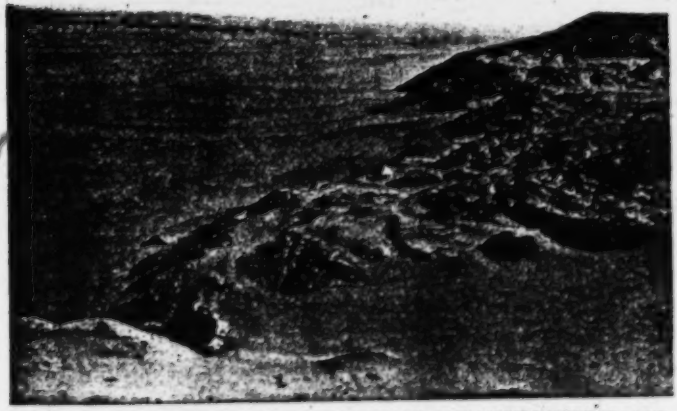

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder. One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[192]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAHR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

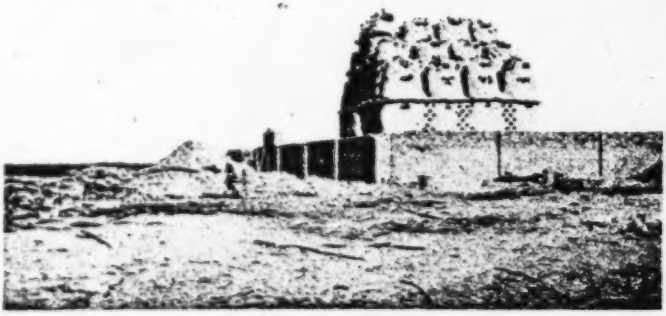

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii, 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

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FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHĀDŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

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I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

[231] [192] [133]

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fikīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *'afrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *'afrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose
152 lamentations are the loudest of all.
[163]

It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the
764 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt
779 have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

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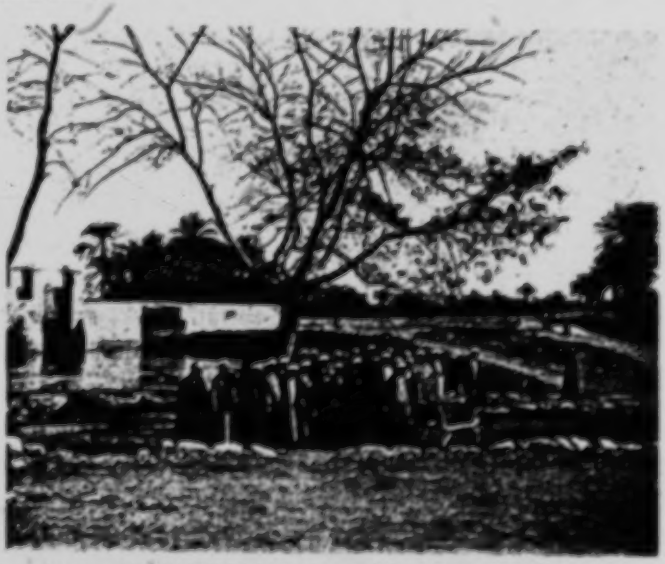

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their
152 wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites
[193] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

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[page 179]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [159] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

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FC [133]

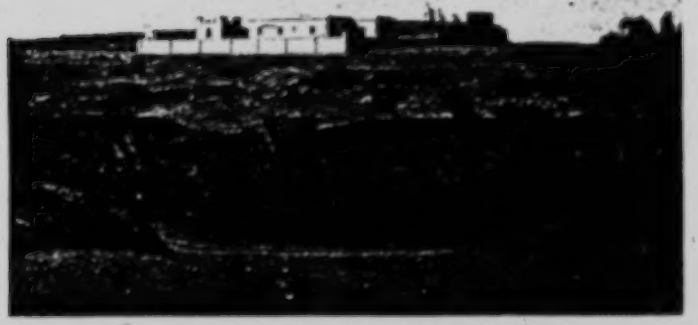

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

FC 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

FC [443] [527]

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive.
121

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

CHAPTER II

THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY

1. – Geography

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There has been much talk of the industrialisation of Egypt. The progress of the last five years is as widespread as it has been rapid. An industrial proletariat has emerged, a native working class, which is worthy of study. But the absence of iron and coal mines has prevented this country from becoming, properly speaking, an industrial centre, and even from being able to satisfy the needs of its own population in manufactured goods. It is and will be for some time to come primarily an agricultural country. This results from its physical structure (¹).

E F 133 134

By reason of its flat surface, its rich, damp loam, its fertilising river, and its warm, dry climate, Egypt is geographically suited for wide and intensive cultivation, and its soil can bear crop after crop without failing.

Were it not for the fertilising Nile, the one artery of life which flows across this desert area of Africa, Egypt, like her neighbours Arabia and Libya, would be little more than a vast expanse of sand, granite, and limestone, in itself useless for either agriculture or industry, — a poverty-stricken land of nomads and shepherds.

Though the Nile has its source outside the land of Egypt, it is to Egypt that its fullness belongs. It enters her boundaries after a journey of 3,000 miles with a rich load of silt drawn from the most varied types of soil. It renews itself year after year, and its rise and fall is the pulse of Egypt's life.

The silt, brought from the south and carried down on the flood, has been deposited by the Nile in alluvial strata,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Egypt MR 1

since the last phase of the quaternary period, over the flat edges of its bed, and spread out in ever widening layers across its mouth, encroaching on the sea (*).

E F 133 134

These deposits have created on top of the granite, limestone or sand a layer of black earth, varying in depth between 10 to 30 metres in different regions.

The Nile soil which thus covers the valley consists of both coarse and colloidal clay, with an admixture of various salts. It is an amalgam of finely ground particles carried down by the Blue and White Niles. The composition of this arable soil, unlike that of most agricultural countries, is substantially the same everywhere. It has a high mineral content, which, as we shall see later, has an important influence on the food of the fellah.

This soil, once deposited, is continually irrigated and enriched by the Nile, by means of either flooding or canalisation, but always under the control of man. The time-honoured system of basin irrigation, still in use over a million feddans, consists in discharging the water at flood-time through small channels on to *hôds* — vast areas of land surrounded by dykes. The land absorbs water until it is saturated; then the remainder slowly drains away, after depositing a layer of the fine silt with which the water was laden before flowing into the basins. Each feddan thus receives about 7,000 cubic metres of water, which leave 8 or 9 tons of silt. Immediately after the water is drained off (about November) the crops are sown. They are then left to ripen until harvest-time without needing any further irrigation. The land then lies fallow till the next flood. However, many of those who farm basin land, in order to produce a summer as well as a winter crop, make use of the underground water by means of pumps, which are now so common that they have modified the system of cultivation in these districts.

F 134 312 241

The perennial system of irrigation, introduced in 1840, and made possible through engineering works, of which the most notable is the Aswan Dam, now covers all the Delta and the greater part of Upper Egypt (4,300,000 feddans). The Nile no longer completely floods the land. Its water is stored in reservoirs, then distributed through barrages into a network of canals which water the land throughout the year.

F 312

241 132 Thus at High Nile (August to October) the fields are no longer flooded, but only irrigated, and bear the crops called *nili*. When the flood is over, and the level of the flood is falling (November to April), the land, being still moist, receives sufficient water for the winter crop (*shetwi*). At Low Nile (April to July) the reservoirs are gradually emptied to provide water for ripening a third crop, called the summer crop (*séfi*).

132 134 To be fruitful, the land needs not only water, but also air. The sun, by the vertical cracks its summer heat makes in the level soil, plays its part in reviving the fallow land. It removes excess salt and mellows the soil by letting the air penetrate deeply into the earth, so that the land is dehydrated and renewed (').

We thus see the Nile, helped by the sun, already at work preparing and cultivating the land, and so determining the fellah's physical environment, the living Egypt.

133 In fact, wherever the Nile does not penetrate, either from above or below, the desert begins abruptly, without any intermediate zone. The conventional colourings of maps, which show Egypt as a thin green strip across a great dun-coloured space, correspond exactly with reality. From the top of the Great Pyramid near Cairo, or from the hills of the Sa'id (°), one is struck, whichever way one looks, by the clear line of demarcation where human labour and habitation stop short. Between the cliffs of the Libyan and Arabian deserts lies a level valley, 650 miles in length. Its width is less than a mile at Wadi-Halfa (°), 3 miles at Edfu, about 8 between Luxor and Assiut, where it narrows again, and 15 at Beni-Suef, whence a branch goes off westward to the Fayûm. From Cairo it spreads out fanwise to form a coast-line of 160 miles at the north of the Delta. In all there are some 12,000 square miles of good land, lying in the midst of about 400,000 square miles of barren sand. This 3% of the whole area represents the living and productive Egypt.

Its shape is given to it by the Nile. It looks like a giant lotus, whose roots, the White and the Blue Nile, are planted in the heart of Africa, in the high mountains of Abyssinia and the great lakes of the Congo. From Khartoum the sap rises along a single stem, which pushes into Egypt at Wadi-Halfa, shows signs of green at Aswan, bears a single leaf

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133 out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133 political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137 tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133 see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241 nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'id, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2. — Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162 nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241 maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (11). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (11). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 139 241]

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (11). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 194

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VI

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

571 The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural, because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd. In the fields, as tenant or owner, he works with his wife and children; as a hired labourer, he works in a gang, swinging the *fass* or sowing seed in a concerted rhythm.

Limited as the fellah's horizon may be within the village, he works in the open air and in public more often than in the privacy of his house. The women go in groups to draw water, the children play in swarms, daily life is collective and communal. But to understand the village community, it is necessary first of all to look at the village.

361 137 Seen from outside, as it stands up in the middle of the plain or against the pale background of the desert cliffs, it is a huddled earthy mass, compact but shapeless, and crowned with bundles of brushwood. A whitewashed building, more important than the rest — perhaps a great pigeon-cote or the house of a notable — stands out from the confusion. Palms or acacias, sycamores or *lebbekhs* rise above the mass and relieve its drabness. In the bright light of Egypt these grouped or scattered trees around or in amongst the houses give a fine effect, and Brunhes has devoted a whole page to the picture in his *Géographie Humaine*. It is not for us to imitate him. We must pierce behind this magic veil, which is all that most observers can see, and probe the reality.

361 133 As the villages date from before the period of flood-control, few of them are actually on the Nile banks. Most stand back, at distances from a hundred yards to half a mile away. Others straggle along the edge of the Upper Egyptian desert, or stand huddled on a *kôm or tell*, that is to say the ruins of an ancient village or an artificial mound or dyke. In districts where the Nile flood is no longer to

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel- 721
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

Page 160 (B)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

311
474
291
133

Digging ditches

248
133

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

Page 160 (D)

5. *T.*—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.

A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrizi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 33 [139] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

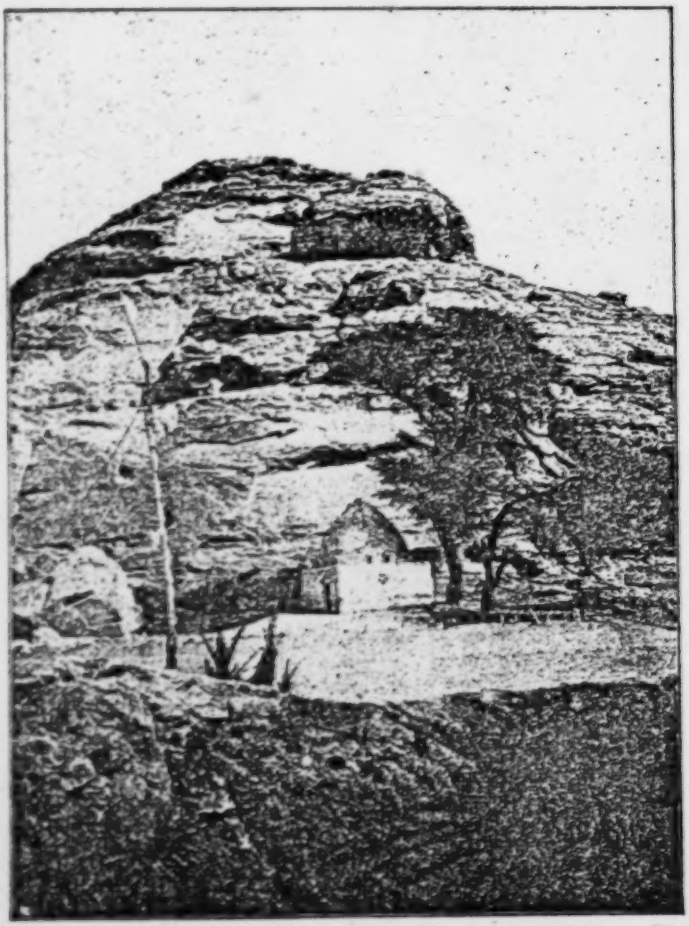
10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]

Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133
346
766



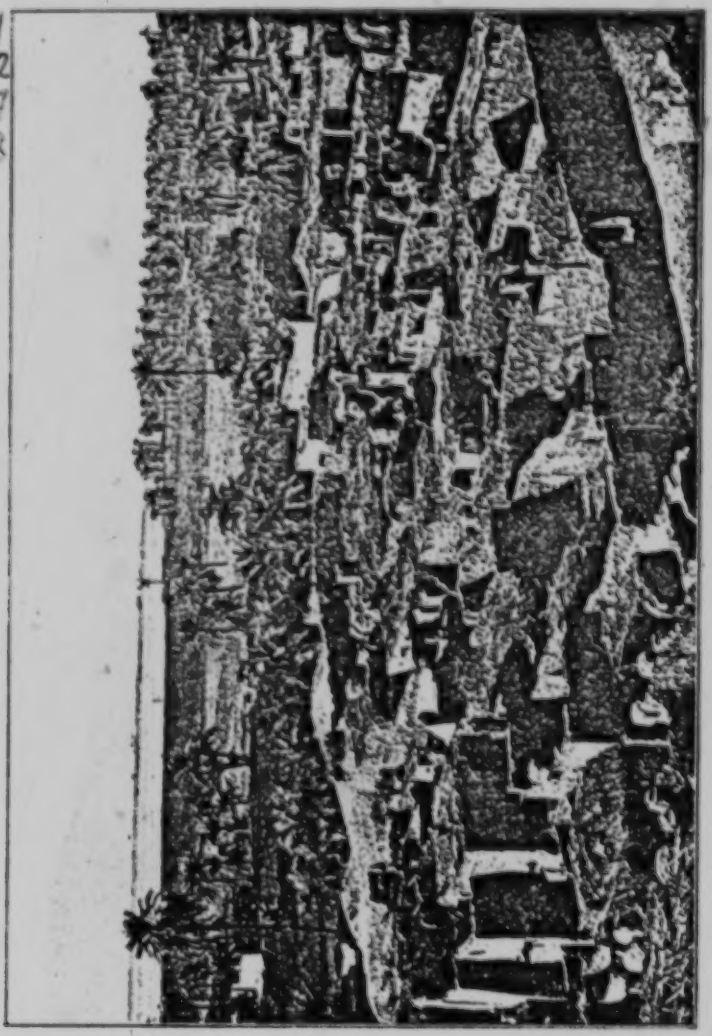
Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Grave of a Saint.
(at Elleslye in Nubia.)

[P.3]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

361
342
137
133



The Village of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Invitations.

113.

The girl makes pretense of showing her lover one of the sand-banks which emerge from the Nile, suffer many changes and disappear, according to the season of the year. Here, of course, it is only a cloak (Maḥmûd). 539x 932 [133]

Ya tara, ya ḥabîbi,
kuntē fēn el-yōm?
ša'rak mesabsab,
we-'ēnak sable lin-nōm.
5 *Iṭla' bina 'aṣr 'ali,*
ninām we-nišba' nōm.
wafarragak 'ala-l-gezīre,
illi-tnašet el-yōm.

Where, my beloved,
Hast thou been today?
Thy hair hangs on thy brow
And thine eye is heavy with sleep.
5 Let us mount a lofty house
And sleep till we are sated with sleep.
And I will show thee the island
Which has formed itself today.

2. Literally: hangs straight down.

5. 'aṣr, literally: castle, designates a solidly built structure with an upper story. Even a house such as the middle class in the cities possess, is, in the country beside the miserable peasant-huts, designated as 'aṣr, "castle" (Vollers). [342] [565]

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	Percentage of Total Population	
	Silwa	Egypt
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [323] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [291] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [134] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is [342] available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered [182] with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

CHAPTER II

THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY

I. – Geography

E 177 565 241

There has been much talk of the industrialisation of Egypt. The progress of the last five years is as widespread as it has been rapid. An industrial proletariat has emerged, a native working class, which is worthy of study. But the absence of iron and coal mines has prevented this country from becoming, properly speaking, an industrial centre, and even from being able to satisfy the needs of its own population in manufactured goods. It is and will be for some time to come primarily an agricultural country. This results from its physical structure (*).

E F 133 134

By reason of its flat surface, its rich, damp loam, its fertilising river, and its warm, dry climate, Egypt is geographically suited for wide and intensive cultivation, and its soil can bear crop after crop without failing.

Were it not for the fertilising Nile, the one artery of life which flows across this desert area of Africa, Egypt, like her neighbours Arabia and Libya, would be little more than a vast expanse of sand, granite, and limestone, in itself useless for either agriculture or industry, — a poverty-stricken land of nomads and shepherds.

Though the Nile has its source outside the land of Egypt, it is to Egypt that its fullness belongs. It enters her boundaries after a journey of 3,000 miles with a rich load of silt drawn from the most varied types of soil. It renews itself year after year, and its rise and fall is the pulse of Egypt's life.

The silt, brought from the south and carried down on the flood, has been deposited by the Nile in alluvial strata,

since the last phase of the quaternary period, over the flat edges of its bed, and spread out in ever widening layers across its mouth, encroaching on the sea (*). E F 133 134

These deposits have created on top of the granite, limestone or sand a layer of black earth, varying in depth between 10 to 30 metres in different regions.

The Nile soil which thus covers the valley consists of both coarse and colloidal clay, with an admixture of various salts. It is an amalgam of finely ground particles carried down by the Blue and White Niles. The composition of this arable soil, unlike that of most agricultural countries, is substantially the same everywhere. It has a high mineral content, which, as we shall see later, has an important influence on the food of the fellah.

This soil, once deposited, is continually irrigated and enriched by the Nile, by means of either flooding or canalisation, but always under the control of man. The time-honoured system of basin irrigation, still in use over a million feddans, consists in discharging the water at flood-time through small channels on to *hôds* — vast areas of land surrounded by dykes. The land absorbs water until it is saturated; then the remainder slowly drains away, after depositing a layer of the fine silt with which the water was laden before flowing into the basins. Each feddan thus receives about 7,000 cubic metres of water, which leave 8 or 9 tons of silt. Immediately after the water is drained off (about November) the crops are sown. They are then left to ripen until harvest-time without needing any further irrigation. The land then lies fallow till the next flood. However, many of those who farm basin land, in order to produce a summer as well as a winter crop, make use of the underground water by means of pumps, which are now so common that they have modified the system of cultivation in these districts. F 134 312 241

The perennial system of irrigation, introduced in 1840, and made possible through engineering works, of which the most notable is the Aswan Dam, now covers all the Delta and the greater part of Upper Egypt (4,300,000 feddans). The Nile no longer completely floods the land. Its water is stored in reservoirs, then distributed through barrages into a network of canals which water the land throughout the year. F 312

241 132 Thus at High Nile (August to October) the fields are no longer flooded, but only irrigated, and bear the crops called *nili*. When the flood is over, and the level of the flood is falling (November to April), the land, being still moist, receives sufficient water for the winter crop (*shtwi*). At Low Nile (April to July) the reservoirs are gradually emptied to provide water for ripening a third crop, called the summer crop (*sifi*).

132 134 To be fruitful, the land needs not only water, but also air. The sun, by the vertical cracks its summer heat makes in the level soil, plays its part in reviving the fallow land. It removes excess salt and mellows the soil by letting the air penetrate deeply into the earth, so that the land is dehydrated and renewed (').

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

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Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (¹⁰). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (¹¹). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 135 241]

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (¹²). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawîr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence
464 on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([16]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

431 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Turkish Egypt MR2
Egypt MR1

T
F
423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

T At the same time the rate and the method of taxation
F remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become
651 thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry
661 into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

E In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of
F English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarca-
659 tion. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural
423 boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*,
651 consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the
E exact tax and the owner's name ([14]).

F The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Govern-
651 ment already had sufficient data to establish a general
134 rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

based on the same scale of value, varies between 14 and 164 piastres.

Law No. 113, of 1939, fixed the new tax at 16% of the rentable value of the land, according to estimates made throughout the country by special commissions, and based on the average rentals for the previous ten years. However, as before, the maximum tax cannot exceed 164 piastres per feddan.

There was no change in the date-palm tax, which until 1920 stood at 21 piastres per tree, with a five-yearly census; or in the irrigation tax, viz 50 piastres per feddan where *sifi* irrigation could be carried out by natural means (free flow), and 30 piastres for land to which the water had to be raised by mechanical means (lift flow).

Rebates are provided for when crops have deteriorated owing to lack of water, or where irrigation would have been unduly expensive. The tax is payable by the owner alone.

The date of payment, as well as the rate, is fixed beforehand. It varies for each province, according to the times of the main harvests, and payments are made by instalments, so that at the end of the year the whole amount due for the 24 kirats composing each feddan is paid up. For example in Qalioubiya two parts are payable in January, three in March, three in April, eight in October and eight in November.

The tax is collected at the owner's house by a *sarraf*, and the demand note (*wird*), when countersigned, serves as a receipt. If, as often happens, payments are in arrears, the Government obtains payment by distraint and forced sale. For example, to take the *Journal Officiel* for January 1937 only, there are 732 seizures listed, almost all of quite small holdings. These seizures are always advertised in the same terms:

'January 19, 1937. 3 kirats belonging to Imam Imam Ibrahim, situated in the village of Kafr Mansour, Toukh Markaz, in Medawwar *hôd* No. 4, Lot 19, seized according to *procès-verbal* of March 2, 1936, in payment of arrears. Price L.E. 9.600 for the portion seized.'

The Government shows more patience with big landowners. 'It is not just', a *sarraf* once admitted to me. In practice there may be injustice, but the rate of taxation is quite just, and except in times of crisis not unduly high.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellâh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fâlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bâladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semâd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semâd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

5. *T.*—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.

A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrizi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 133 [134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]

Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

NATIVE PLOUGH IN EGAPT

BY

MOHAMED RIAD

Since millenia the cultivable soils of Egypt is confined to the Delta and 407*
the Valley of the Nile. This soil was deposited by the Nile through immemo- 241
rial times and as a result it is composed, generally speaking, of nearly 134
homogeneous fine particles which attain a mean depth of about 10 meters. The fact that such thickness and homogeneity of the cultivated soils rendering the minimum of soil variations has contributed much to the form and technique of the prevailing plough in Egypt. In fact the Egyptian plough is a simple one which is used to break the soil and not like other contemporary ploughs in Europe and elsewhere, does not invert the soil. This may be due to the aforementioned reason, i. e., the homogeneity of the soil, as much as other physical factors foremost among them are the yearly deposition of new soils through the agency of the flood on the one hand, and the penetration of air through the soil particles during the inter-planting period on the other hand. These factors and others 241
did not necessitate deep ploughing or soil inversion, and as long as these 407*
factors remained in control of the type of cultivation in Egypt – which it did all over the history of agriculture in Egypt, due to the system of Basin Irrigation, –the evolution of the Egyptian plough was and is very slow in what concerns the major lines of form and technique. Yet there exist in Egypt at the present time two substantially different types [184]
of ploughs which function in similar physical conditions but exist in different regions. Building a co-existence among these two plough types, mixed offshoots arose to balance the picture and to ease the sharpness of plough boundary in the relatively small cultivable area of Egypt. Now we can differentiate at least seven plough types each with [184]
a limited geographic area.

[p241]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

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11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

113 [464 857] and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

77.

539x

These lines, which Maḥmûd applied to a woman bathing in the river, were almost always combined with No. 40; but they are in all probability a remnant of another song.

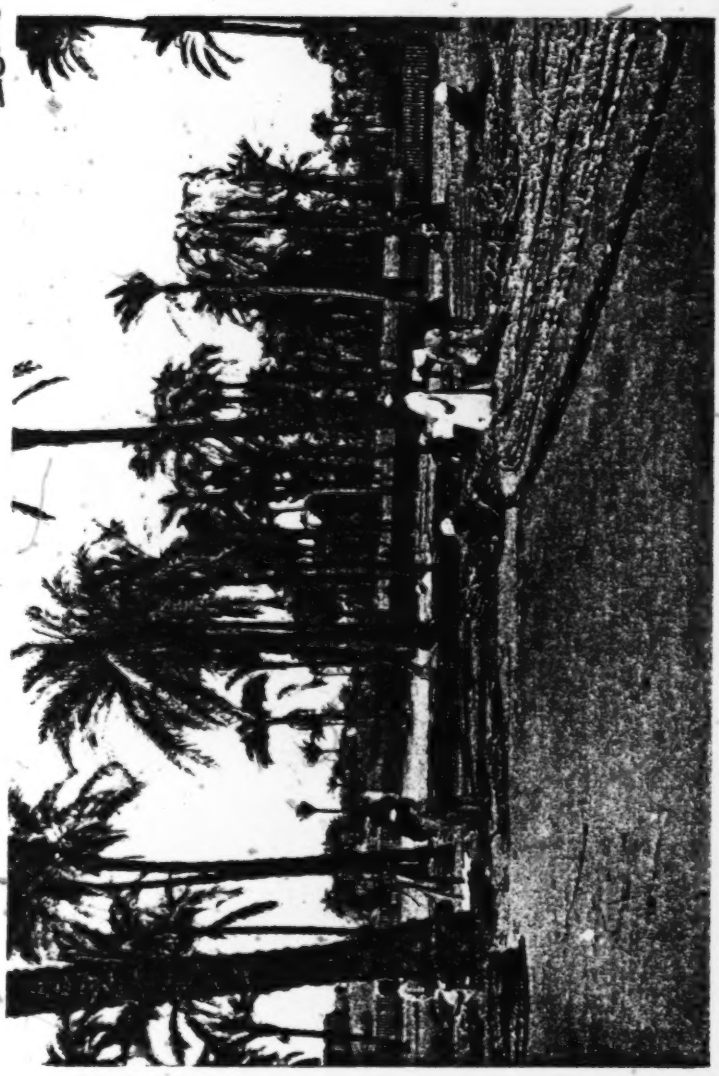
Šilbe is a species of silvery, Nile fish. Šilbe 'arabi is supposed to designate an especially good variety. [136]

'aim bēn el-merākib
zē eš-šilbe-l-'arabi.

Swimming between the ships
Like the silver-fish.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

137
283
291



ROPE-MAKING AT AKHMÎM

The man seated in the centre of the picture is twisting the split and softened strands into a thin cord. See p. 161.

[Facing page 1]
Frontispiece

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-
137 carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features
231 in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii. 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

773

sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

[312]
[133]
[137]
[241]

FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHĀDŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

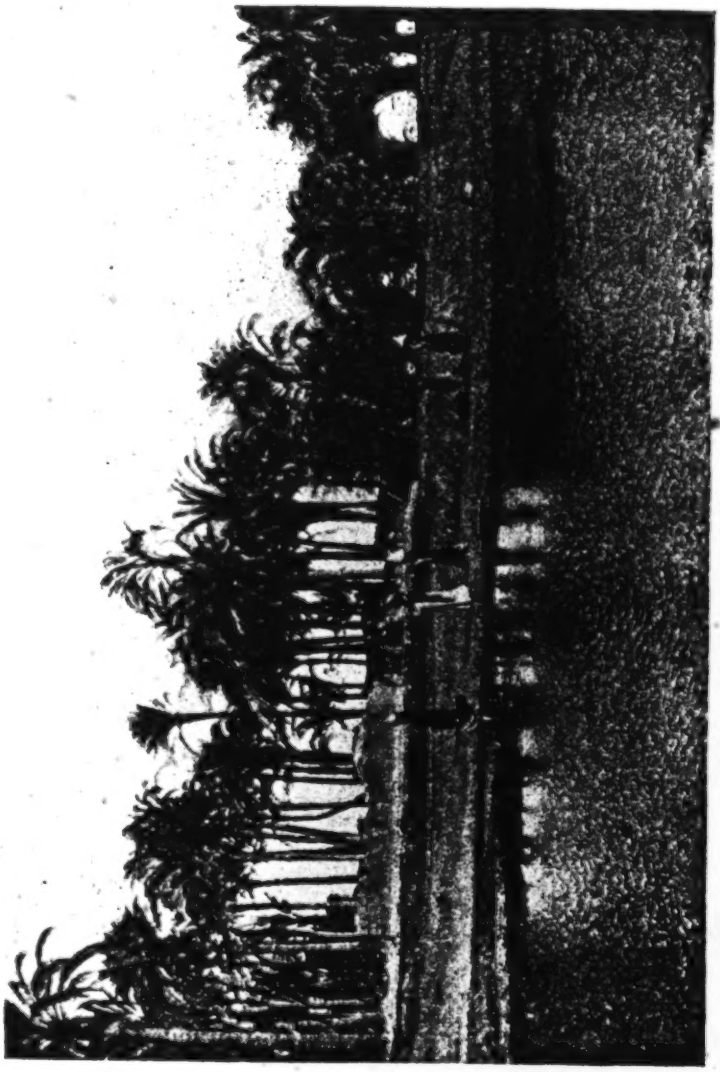


FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

962
137
291
312

[page 41]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 151 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

[163] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the 764 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt 779 have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137] [133] [764]

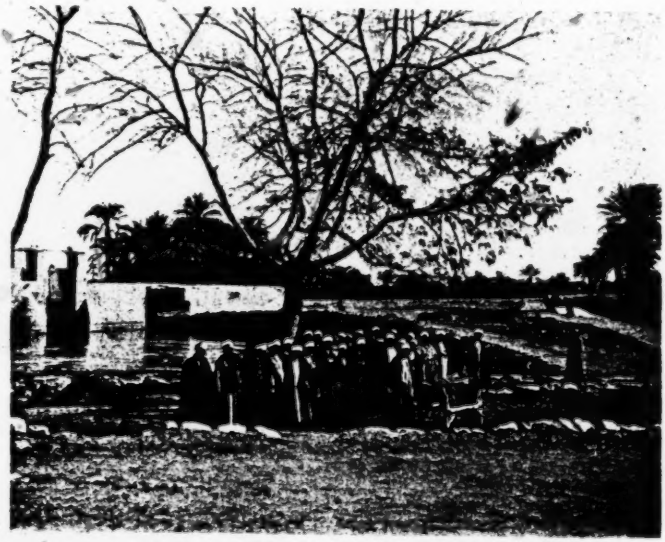


FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 151 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites [193] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

[291] [413] [137]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E+5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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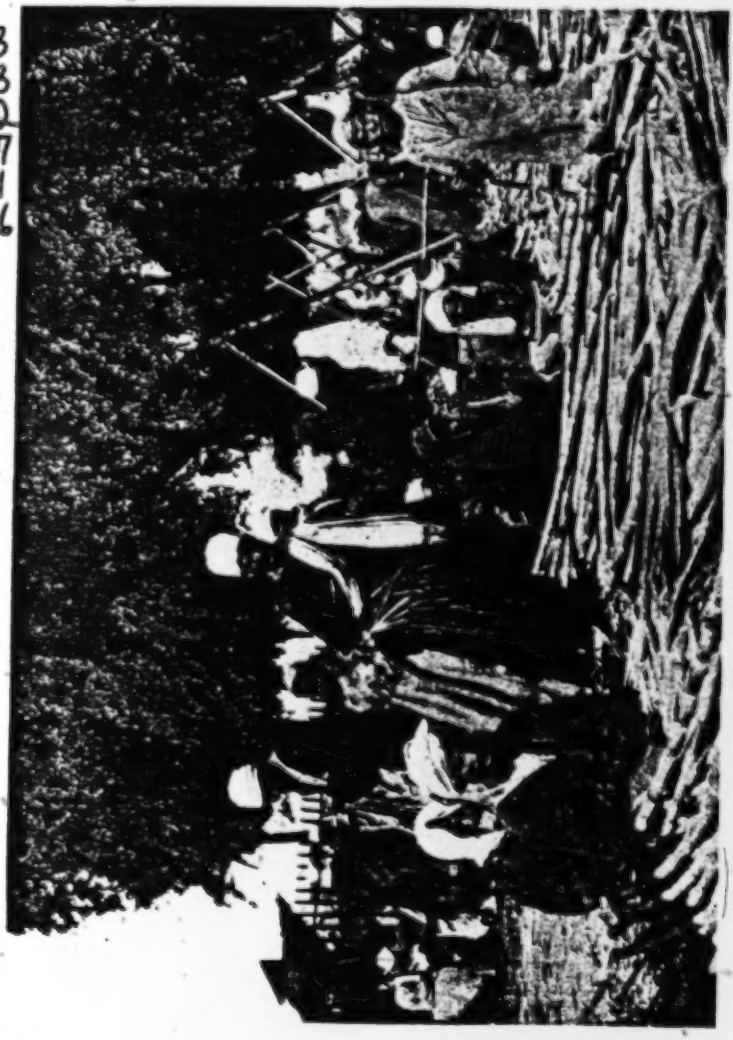

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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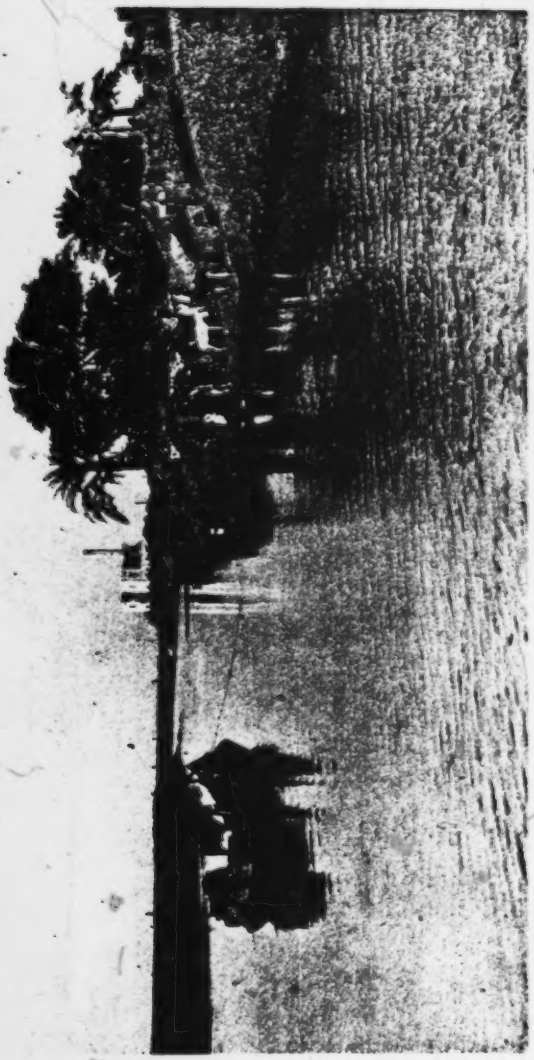

FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

[page 179]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven [346] from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, [197] the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

[349] [137]

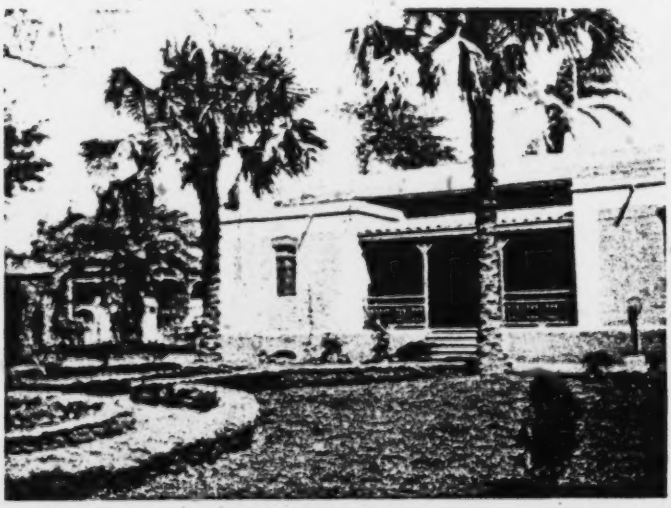

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [373] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VI

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

571 The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural, because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd. In the fields, as tenant or owner, he works with his wife and children; as a hired labourer, he works in a gang, swinging the *fass* or sowing seed in a concerted rhythm.

Limited as the fellah's horizon may be within the village, he works in the open air and in public more often than in the privacy of his house. The women go in groups to draw water, the children play in swarms, daily life is collective and communal. But to understand the village community, it is necessary first of all to look at the village.

361 137 Seen from outside, as it stands up in the middle of the plain or against the pale background of the desert cliffs, it is a huddled earthy mass, compact but shapeless, and crowned with bundles of brushwood. A whitewashed building, more important than the rest — perhaps a great pigeon-cote or the house of a notable — stands out from the confusion. Palms or acacias, sycamores or *lebbekhs* rise above the mass and relieve its drabness. In the bright light of Egypt these grouped or scattered trees around or in amongst the houses give a fine effect, and Brunhes has devoted a whole page to the picture in his *Géographie Humaine*. It is not for us to imitate him. We must pierce behind this magic veil, which is all that most observers can see, and probe the reality.

361 133 As the villages date from before the period of flood-control, few of them are actually on the Nile banks. Most stand back, at distances from a hundred yards to half a mile away. Others straggle along the edge of the Upper Egyptian desert, or stand huddled on a *kôm or tell*, that is to say the ruins of an ancient village or an artificial mound or dyke. In districts where the Nile flood is no longer to

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331
that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 342
The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare 342 by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the [137] Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [513] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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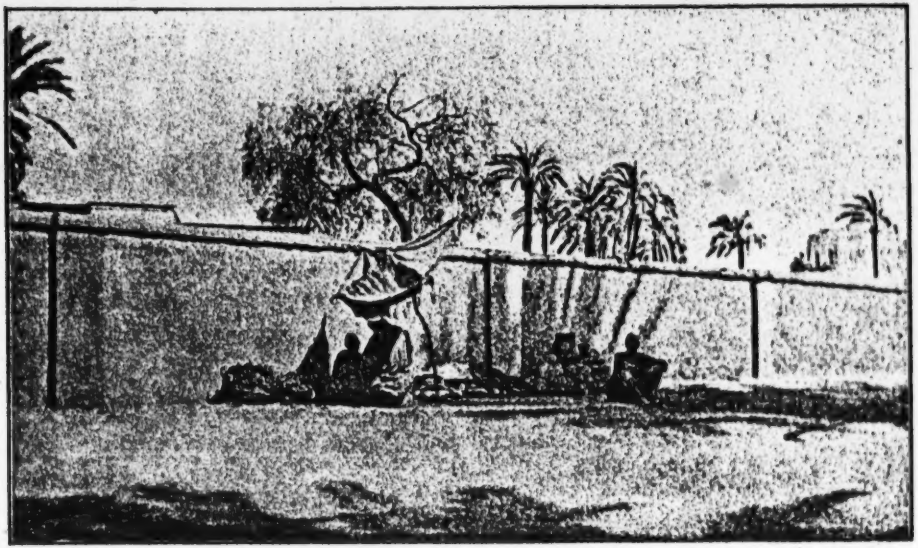

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Gizeh.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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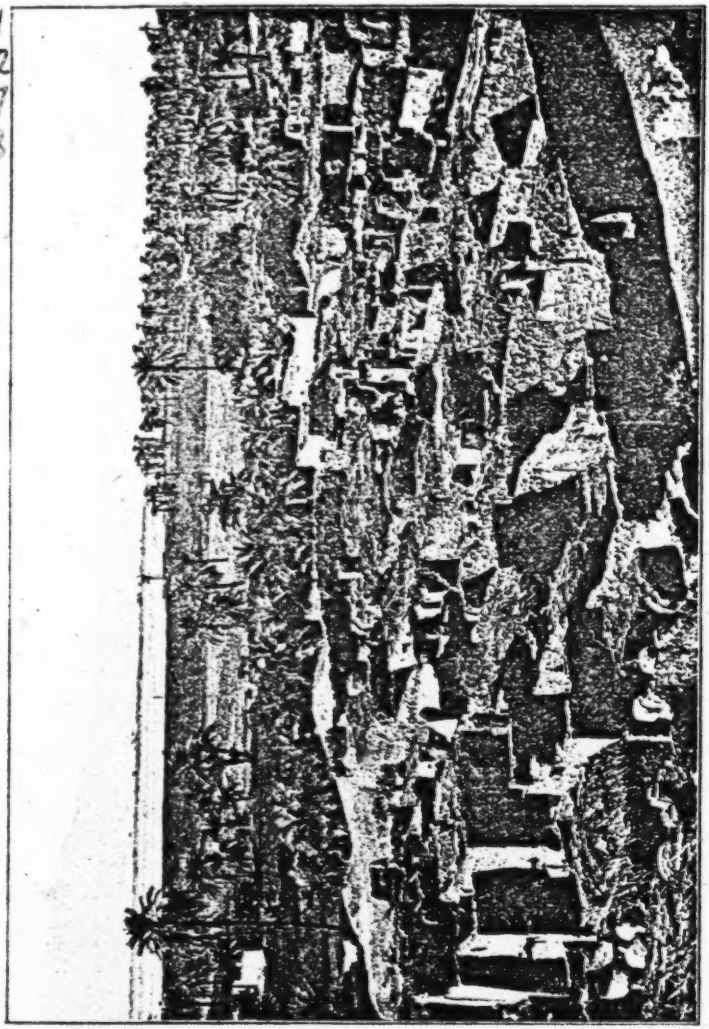

The Village of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (")

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141] Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latîf had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'îdi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [388]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [42] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
976 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
994 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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[854]
[291]
[192]

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[153] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

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When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

E [29] [532] [142]

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

F C [262]
F C [465]
F E [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired.

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is betrothed, pay a large sum of money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young unmarried girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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E 585 789
E 586

common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

F [842]
F [241] [142]
F 887 586

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus
[774] frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed, a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

323 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large
415 lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage,
323 which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

415 142 291

FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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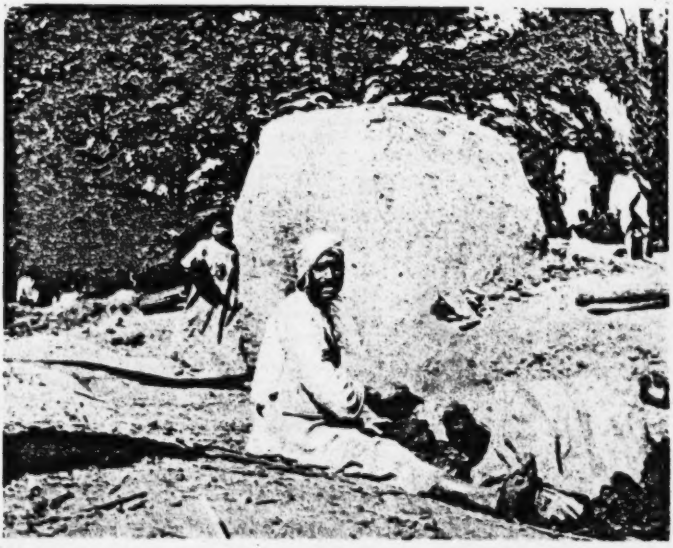
drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323
thick sides.

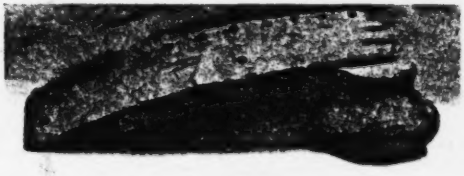
Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the



[291]
[192]
[516]

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a 303
hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. 563
A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

[137]
[091]
[142]
[915]

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement [413]
made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

285 clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained
482 from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A
[482] woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

[415]

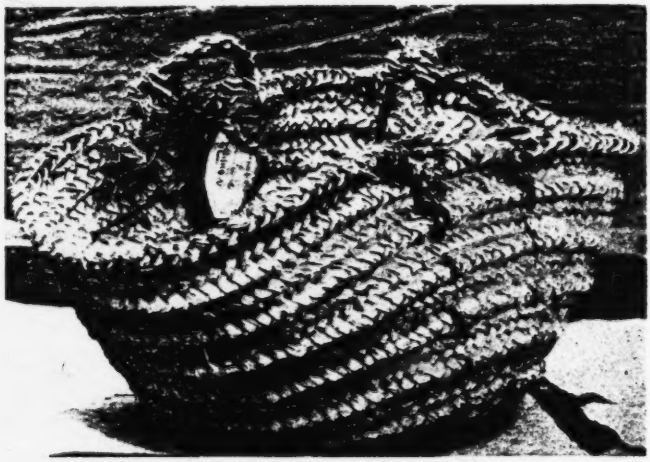

FIG. 83. A MAḲṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the
482 women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried
516 with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-
462 jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age,
482 smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used
857 by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of
● 142 carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not. 142

The *maḳṭaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow 285

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

286 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by
299 specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

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857

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

000 Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462

[286] [299] [291] [14a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

262 The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes.

[169]
[142]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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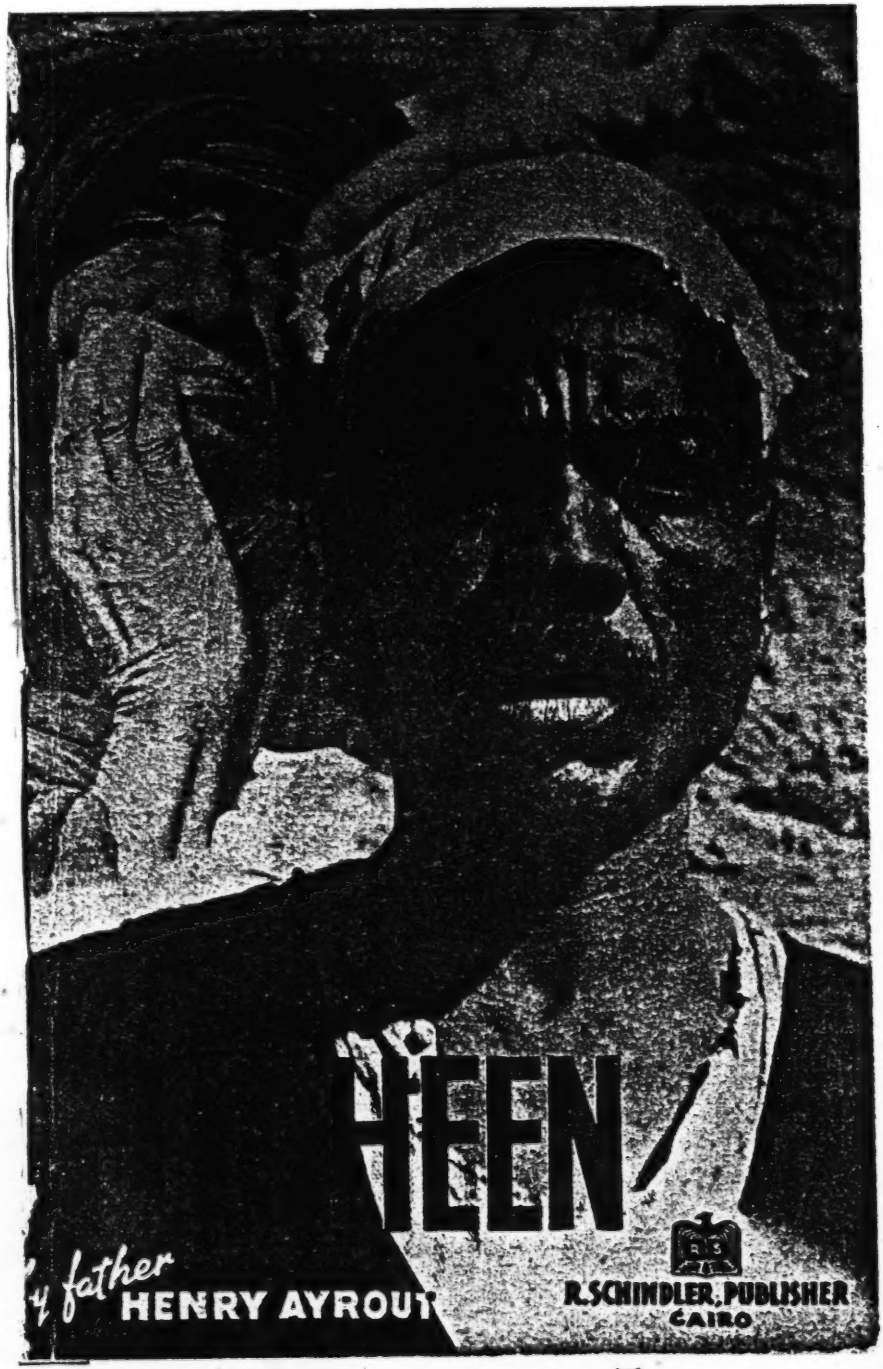

[Front Cover of Book]

Chapter V

THE FELLAH AS A PERSON

We have seen that the fellah's work consists entirely 142 of physical labour and brings his whole body into play. Let us now consider the labourer himself, and examine the fellah from the physical point of view, his race, type, clothing, habits and so on. We shall find once again that water, soil and sun are the physical agents which explain and often even determine the physical constitution of the fellah.

Despite this dependence on the material environment, the liberty of the human will introduces an element of variety. But the will in its turn is subject to another factor, conformity to tradition, and this in the end produces the same result — stability.

(1) *Race and Type*

To what race does the modern fellah belong, and what 144 is his genealogy and origin? No final answer has as yet 174 been found to these questions. Nevertheless, any amount research has been done on the subject, and any number of theories, serious or not, evolved to explain the facts.

To go back no further than the eighteenth century, Volney, for example, declares the fellaheen to be of negroid extraction. Vivant Denon suggests a Caucasian origin. Poinsinet de Sivry, following Pliny the Younger, believes them descended from the Celts. Winckelman suggests Chinese immigration as a solution, and Moreau de Jonnes would put the cradle of the Egyptian race as far away as Polynesia.

Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century, with more knowledge and plausibility, sought a key to the problem nearer Egypt, either in Africa or in Asia.

The theory of African origin is upheld by Hartmann, and later by Flinders Petrie and Maspero, who class the Egyptians with the Ethiopians. Chantre, after anthropo-

F 144 174 175 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

C F 144 779 186 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns, where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F 142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (24)

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [888]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust
● 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For
513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most
151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population.
[515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* ([41]). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions
[515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-
744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy. /181 /183

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow. [803]

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the climate might explain this. But what can explain the apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race? /181 /182

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries. [142 839]

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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When they are happy

Page 160 (A)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

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Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

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8:Schaefer A -5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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Women Drawing Water.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

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121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the •144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 179 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. I. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter V

THE FELLAH AS A PERSON

We have seen that the fellah's work consists entirely 142
of physical labour and brings his whole body into play. Let us now consider the labourer himself, and examine the fellah from the physical point of view, his race, type, clothing, habits and so on. We shall find once again that water, soil and sun are the physical agents which explain and often even determine the physical constitution of the fellah.

Despite this dependence on the material environment, the liberty of the human will introduces an element of variety. But the will in its turn is subject to another factor, conformity to tradition, and this in the end produces the same result — stability.

(1) *Race and Type*

To what race does the modern fellah belong, and what 144
is his genealogy and origin? No final answer has as yet 174
been found to these questions. Nevertheless, any amount research has been done on the subject, and any number of theories, serious or not, evolved to explain the facts.

To go back no further than the eighteenth century, Volney, for example, declares the fellaheen to be of negroid extraction. Vivant Denon suggests a Caucasian origin. Poinsinet de Sivry, following Pliny the Younger, believes them descended from the Celts. Winckelman suggests Chinese immigration as a solution, and Moreau de Jonnes would put the cradle of the Egyptian race as far away as Polynesia.

Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century, with more knowledge and plausibility, sought a key to the problem nearer Egypt, either in Africa or in Asia.

The theory of African origin is upheld by Hartmann, and later by Flinders Petrie and Maspero, who class the Egyptians with the Ethiopians. Chantre, after anthropo-

144 metric research covering thousands of types both past and
174 present, concludes that the Egyptians, although not absolutely native to their present soil, are essentially Africans, of Libyan extraction, and that if there was any Asiatic infiltration, it had no influence on the race. ([34])

Schweinfurth, relying on botanical evidence, believes Southern Arabia to be the source of the Egyptian race, while Amelineau, de Rougé, and (more authoritatively) J. de Morgan, who supports his theory by the comparative study of language, art, customs and physical characteristics, consider Chaldea to be a more likely source. ([35])

The theory now in favour, because it is less simple, may be nearer the truth. It can be summed up thus: — In prehistoric times Asiatic invaders, perhaps Arabs or Babylonians, conquered the Nile Valley, and intermingled as the predominant race with people already established there, a composite stock of natives and Ethiopians.

This theory is a synthesis of the two earlier hypotheses, and has the advantage of taking into account facts which support both of them while allowing of the inclusion of the Egyptians in the family of *homo mediterraneus*, a compound of Semitic and Hamitic stocks which peoples North Africa, a great part of Hither Asia, and the shores of the Mediterranean, and shows, where it borders on the black races, certain affinities with the Ethiopians.

The study of profiles in ancient frescoes, and of skeletons discovered in a variety of excavations, obliges us none the less to recognise three original types: the Semites, long-skulled and of medium height; the Mediterraneans, short-skulled, with a short, straight nose; the Libyans, snub-nosed and short-skulled. But the climate and agricultural life have worn away these differences between indigenous and foreign elements and created a specifically Egyptian stock which is no less indivisible than the Nile Valley itself.

174 However all this may be, and although we may not
175 know precisely where the Ancient Egyptians came from, we can be quite sure that the present inhabitants of the country — or at least the fellaheen, and it is with them that we are concerned — are descended from the Egyptians of dynastic times, with whom they are linked without a break and almost without intermixture, despite the passage of fifty centuries and conquest after conquest from abroad.

The conditions of servitude and contempt in which the native 174
population has been held by foreign conquerors since the 175
decline of the Pharaohs have had the effect of preserving the race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, French and English have in this matter all followed the same policy. They have laid hold on the riches of Egypt, and taken power in order to do so, but have neither associated with nor supplanted the fellaheen who produce the wealth. Egypt has always been too densely populated to be suitable for colonial expansion. The conquerors have never been numerous enough to modify the race of the conquered. Their manner of life has always been different, and contact with them has only aroused antagonism.

There has, however, been some penetration of nomads and negroes from near areas. After the Moslem conquest in the seventh century a number of Arabs settled in Egypt, not only in the towns but also in the countryside. As conquerors they were able to impose on the native inhabitants their language, their religion, some of their customs with regard to women, and their cruelty in vengeance. In spite of this the original inhabitants, a hundred times more numerous, especially in the countryside, with women stronger and more fertile, and a manner of life so persistent and unchanging, have marked the Arab elements with their own stamp. In establishing themselves on the black soil the Arabs adopted the traditions of those who ploughed it. This is still noticeable even today in the villages of the Upper Delta, where on account of the richness of the soil Arab immigration was heavier, and in hamlets recently settled on the edge of the desert. After three or four generations the scion can no longer be distinguished from the stock, or else it has proved too dissimilar to take the graft. Assimilation to type is in fact consequent upon assimilation of the fellah way of life. The Arabs who have remained nomadic, and live by the transport of cotton on camel-back, by pasturing flocks, or by robbery and murder,—those in fact known in Egypt as Bedouin, — differ markedly from the fellaheen by their finer features and their more excitable temperament.

Another fusion has taken place in the south, between 174
fellaheen and negroes. Here, the two elements being more 174
dissimilar, the mixture is more noticeable, but the Egyptian 175

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

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144 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption
174 of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat
175 similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

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144 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns,
779 where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while
186 the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

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142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
854 achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the
[196] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that
195 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

857 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over,
[866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant
857 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters
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The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

692 582 577 obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

145 844 163 165 101 [292] [190] 577 831 562

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

684 [554]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

582 away, that is, are arranged to marry some boy or other, and
[145] as soon as both arrive at puberty they are married. Men marry as a rule from their fifteenth to their eighteenth year. These early marriages appear to have by no means a degenerating influence upon the race, but on the contrary a beneficial one, the marriages being, with few exceptions, fruitful and happy, and the women being not so liable to be attacked with female ailments, such as chlorosis, hysteria, and nervous weakness. The same principles are applied also in the case of the domestic animals.

In a learned treatise by a modern Arabic physician who studied in Europe it is maintained, however, that for the men of his country the age of eighteen to twenty, for the women of sixteen, is the most suitable. The main consideration relative to early marriages, the bread question, is regarded by the Oriental only as of secondary importance, he only thinks of it when he is hungry. So long as the son is still too young the father provides for the maintenance of him and his family,
[581] when he is old enough he earns his daily bread himself, and when the father grows old the son in turn provides for him.

584 When their young son wishes to have a wife the father and mother set out in quest of a bride for him; by the latter the bath is often selected for this purpose, and her sober reason often brings more suitable pairs together than the impulses of the heart. Both young people have also to acquiesce in the arrangement, they cannot be forced, and the marriage is not valid until on the "uncovering and unveiling" the pair feel a mutual pleasure; but at this age a refusal is rare, and in case of after disillusion the marriage may be easily dissolved on either side. The search for a bride is generally quite unnecessary, as in two-thirds of the cases it has been previously settled that the young fellow is to marry his female cousin, and if he has none, more distant relations are applied
582 to, and lastly strangers. If these marriages of cousins had really such a prejudicial effect upon a race as they are usually represented to have it must have been long ago noticed in Egypt; its inhabitants, however, show no inferiority either from a physical or an intellectual point of view. The low

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

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In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

[463]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoos-sa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread(4).

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three
252 inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (**). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow 562
men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman
who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their [571]
spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet
inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose [301]
rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost [302]
an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while
men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and [291]
never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not while women's [195]
speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not
expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, [482]
men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back
or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women
keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although [195]
both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have
different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as [201]
a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women
grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or
shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the [152]
woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri,
ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threa- [578]
tening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a [302]
woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different
invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their [195]
speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do
not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque [194]
as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support
for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-
religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about [156]
pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere.
It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the [193]
village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person [197]
feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban [369]
dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at 834
each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by
the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn
their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and
men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex
taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children
till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms
and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness.
On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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865 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own
593 care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the
[152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the
[853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did
865 not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next
[862] oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would
000 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills. 861 [825]

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure. [152] [154] 159

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

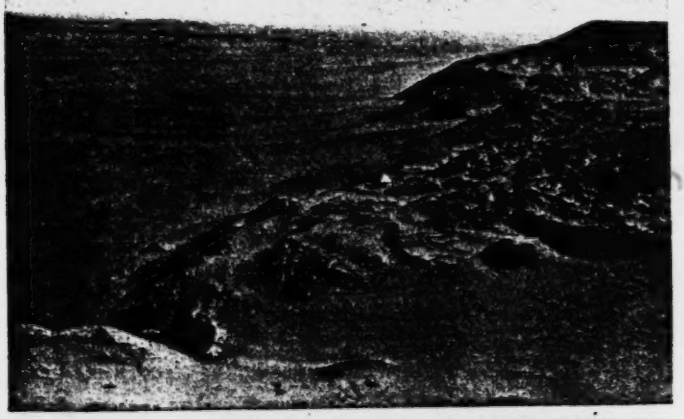

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposition may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder. One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy, which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgiveness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

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562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[426] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment ; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

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152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
774 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
774 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
761 been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

776 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
774 widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
774 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [162]

A woman's *karīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *karīn* 776
or *karīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774
karīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *karīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *karīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775]
karīneh, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *karīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791]
go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789
the agreement of the queen of the *akrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *karīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*higāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 521
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

302 852 778 I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

F C 302 852 778 As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīt*), and there is a good deal of singing.

F C [431] F C [535] [152]

000 I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 580 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [152] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is 584 prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 585 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she 492 is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791 832 [291] 431 152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

584

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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291] [192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] [774] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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Upper Egypt

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [792] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [152]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

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764 151 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

[463] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the 764 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt 779 have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137] [133] [764]

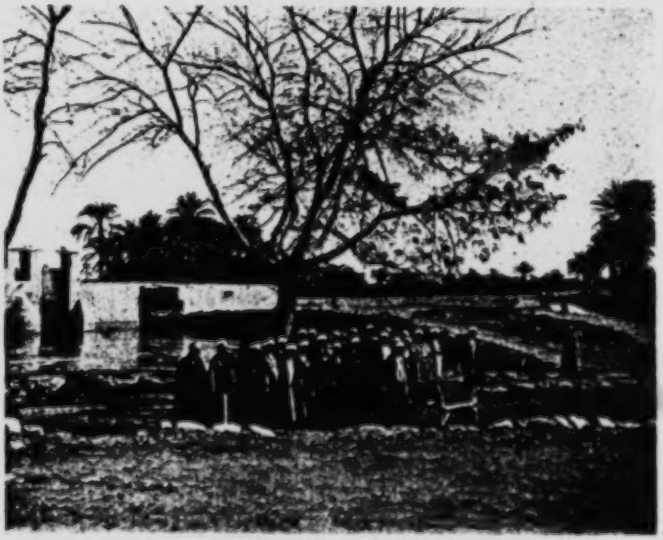

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 151 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiqīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites [793] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached. 764 152 [788]

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion. 764 775 787 [776]

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow. 774 775

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them- 764

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-ings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
269 recitatons, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people presen, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a shar in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

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FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, eing called *kaḥk*.

769 On pesenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the sou of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is qute a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with gref, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of E [152] [302] women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on E [123] [515] the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in E [292] the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they E [302] would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

" *Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ* " (" Better, much better "), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !*" (" O my brother, my brother ! ").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the dancing women from outside), and the men had some difficulty in getting past them into the room again and closing the door. The sister got up and rushed toward the door leading into the room where her dead brother lay, crying out to him, "*Ta'āla, ta'āla!*" ("Come, come!"), the mourning women at the same time uttering their piercing cries of grief, so that the din was deafening. As the men came out with the coffin, which now contained the body, the pandemonium became greater than ever

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[492]

FIG. 55. COPTIC FUNERAL: COFFIN ON CAMEL'S BACK

The women shrieked, and the sister tore off her veil (at other times considered a most immodest thing to do), wrenched her dress open at the throat, and rent her garments to such a degree that her female companions, for decency's sake, were obliged to restrain her. The coffin was then placed on the ground, and the women seated themselves round it. They hammered with their fists on the lid, shrieking to the dead man, and flinging their arms wildly about in the air. The sister so completely lost her self-control that I urged the men to advance and take up the coffin. After some difficulty they managed to hoist it up on to their shoulders, and, followed by a crowd of screaming women, at last got out of the house. The coffin was placed on the back of a donkey, though a camel is more often used (see Fig. 55), and the procession set off for the Coptic monastery situated in the desert a few miles away.

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège.*

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

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The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

F C [537]

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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

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E [293] [297] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

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502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

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[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

> *Shawādīf,*
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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787 685 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291] [342] [352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently [152] very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 191
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

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787 786 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
.MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship. 791 789

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend. 755 753 123

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness. 593 152 776 152 158

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and 756 755

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 755 796

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

791 776

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

F 342 469 F 842 755

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

F 782 756 [152]

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

F 782 776 755

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

F 513 776

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E 513 776 [188] E 755 787 776 152 C 796 799 C [592] [142] C [198] [871] C 776

colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 342 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 627 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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964 The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walî*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [964] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mûlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f. [58]

[2] *Walî* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 173.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 232 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [151] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 762 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 789 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p.81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombe chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

A [532] [534]

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, The Rock Tombs of Meir, Part II, Pl. III.

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F A

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, 533 534 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strasburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

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[64]
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THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when a death occurs (pp. 111 f., 122 ff.) is still admirably illustrated by a relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Sakkāreh.[1] The widow is depicted as having collapsed in a faint on hearing of her husband's sudden death, and then, after having been restored to consciousness and dragged to her feet, as tottering along supported by two friends. The various attitudes of grief of the women surrounding the widow are characteristic of modern female mourners. It is interesting to observe, too, that one of the attendants holds the widow's necklace, which has been taken off on receipt of the news of her husband's death (*cf.* p. 50). Further proof that the modern Egpytian peasant women display their grief before and at a funeral by exactly the same gestures and conduct as did their ancestors—by dishevelling the hair, tearing the clothes, exposing the breasts, gathering up mud and with it plastering the head, breasts, and arms, and by wildly waving the arms and beating the head and breasts—is to be found in numbers of ancient paintings and reliefs.[2] An admirable example is the photograph

A
[212]
[532]

FIG. 162. WAILING WOMEN
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 8.

[1] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pls. LXXXI f.

[2] See W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, Fig. 5 on p. 33; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 120, 166, 167, 209, 210; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York, 1925), Pls. XIX ff. (Pl. XXI shows a woman placing mud or dust on her head); Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt* (London, 1915), Pl. XXIV; G. Roeder, *Die Denkmäler des Pelizaeus Museums zu Hildesheim* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 111 f.

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[113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F A 764 152

(Fig. 162) of a painting in the tomb-chapel of Re'mōse at Thebes.

The attitude of the wailing mother in Fig. 50, p. 110, and Fig. 137, p. 236, finds an exact parallel in the wailing women depicted in a painting in the tomb-chapel of Amenemḥēt at Thebes.[1]

A [535] [532]

F A [822]

FIG. 163. FUNERARY DANCE PERFORMED BY FEMALE MOURNERS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 419.

The modern custom of smearing the hands, arms, and face with blue dye (pp. 111, 122, 264) may also be ancient, in view of blue having been the ancient mourning colour (p. 286); but, so far as my brother is aware, the ancient artists have not shown this in the pictures of wailing women.

The perambulation of the town or village by the female relatives and friends immediately after a death has taken place (p. 109) is described by Herodotus[2] in the following words:

> When a member of any distinction dies in an household, all the female members of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then, leaving the corpse in the house, they parade the town, and smite themselves, having their garments girt up and their breasts exposed; and all their female kin accompany them.

A 764 765 535

The pre- and post-burial dance performed by the mourning women, described on pp. 114, 123, 263, finds close parallel in a relief from a New Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh, now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 163). As in the funerary dance described on p. 114, the women are dancing to the beating of single-membrane

[1] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *ibid.*, bottom register, left.
[2] ii, 85.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1] FA 782 342 [346]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning. FA 165 152 ● 176 [119]

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8] FA 577 824

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9] FA 538

A 113

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.

[2] ii, 90.

[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.

[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.

[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.

[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.

[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.

[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.

[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoosa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shády in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoosa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [831]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (**).

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is m[illegible] and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
●152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrizi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
163 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

747 361 291 431 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoosas*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 515] Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk [346 794] of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[758 [illegible]] Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 181] When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [597]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152] ●

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 784 765 769 735

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
[153] cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared
[152] especially by the young. And since that is only the result of
[361] frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers
[562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

[157] "AND for Syphilis (*tashwish*) they 'prescribed' incensing,
Which an "old wife" among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [= the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation?
And does their 'incensing' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton?"

Some of the "old wives" in the provinces were famed in past ages for their "cure" of venereal disease by "incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An "old wife" came to "incense" a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from
[164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the "incensing" of the "doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl mas-lakha*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the "physician" goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

"WHEN the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *shabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: 'Incensing is most beneficial in curing.'"

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

4. Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīnek* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *afrīn*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *felláḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [848] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīnek* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīnek* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīnek*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīnek*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīnek* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīnek*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīnek* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheiḫ* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīneks* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīnek* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

79.

A Cool Reception.

539x
832

Ya ḥali 'al-bedawīye.
u-la'etni fid-darb eṣ-ṣaiya'.
wel-ḥatim fi-ṣbaḥha yezaiya'.
Ḥallet el-'azib mitnaiya',
5 *Min ginno ḥarra' eṭ-ṭa'iye.*

O, in what a state am I, because of the Beduin girl!
She met me in the narrow path,
And the ring on her finger sparkled. [301]
She left the lad standing, so that he flew into a rage. [152]
5 In wrath he threw his cap into the fire.

1. El-bedawīye (the Beduin girl) is a frequent subject of the songs of the peasant lads.
4. The sudden change from the first to the third person, is not a rare occurrence in such songs.
5. Respecting this cap compare No. 57, note on l. 4.

[P.84 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

106.

"Love . . . is not Provoked."

539x

Jealous women attempt to blacken a lover in the eyes 152
of his sweetheart.

En-nas 'alû-li: ḥabîbik kwoiyis —
'ultê: ni, ma-lo?
'alu-mḥanni yemîno —
'ultê: wi-šmalo!
5 *'alu: beyi'la' u-yilbis —*
'ultê: mim-malo!
'alu: beyâkul melabbis —
'ultê: hanîyâ-lo!
'alu: da fi er-radîye —
10 *'ultê: mîn ṭalo?*
Rûḥu, ya 'awâzil,
u-baṭṭalu di-l-'ôl!
illa ma'â laḥz,
yirmi kullê min ṭalo!

People said to me: Thy lover is handsome —
I said: Yes, what is the matter with him?
They said: He colors his right hand with henna —[302]
I said: His left also!
5 They said: He makes many changes in his dress —

539
152

I said: With his own money!
They said: He eats sweets —
I said: May they agree with him!
They said: He is ill-natured —
10 I said: Who has laid hold of him?
Be gone, you jealous creatures,
And cease your talk!
Unless you do, you will learn that his glance
Vanquishes everyone who lays hold of him!

302
157

1. He is an effeminate fop! The dyeing of certain portions of the hands and feet, with the leaves of the henna shrub (Lawsonia inermis), customary among the women and children, is considered, when practiced by men, a sign of effeminacy.

5. He is a dandy.

7. He has a sweet-tooth.

10. That is to say: Who provoked him? He must have had cause for being unpleasant. Maḥmūd interpreted this line as: "min fīkum misik fī" that is to say, "Which of you has laid hold of him."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

121.

Jealousy.

*589
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Ya abyaḍ el-bēḍ, 'ul-li wiš garaḥ ḫaddak,
garḥ es-sikkīn wala munyati 'aḍḍak?
Sāyi' 'alēk en-nabi, we-sāyi' 'alēk rabbak
ma tiḥša' etnēn, wa-ḥyati 'ala 'albak.

Thou fairest of the fair, what has wounded thy cheek?
Is it a stab from a knife or has my desire bitten thee?
— — I adjure thee by the Prophet and I adjure thee by thy Lord,
That thou love not two at once, for my life hangs on thy heart.

1 He does not speak out the suspicion which leads to the following.

4 The conclusion probably means: My life hangs upon thy faithfulness.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnêye mis-sahar dablāne.
Sanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Ḥāṣimt ummi wabāye ʿala šāno.
5 *Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.*

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
5 Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, [562] at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [191]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204-408 not Processed]

1:Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1909; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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The writer is however aware that his surmise concerning the stimulation of memory in the village's culture is neither fully documented nor based on experimental data as was that of Nadel's experiments to ascertain the differences in cognitive processes between the school children of the two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe.[1] 153

Moreover, the writer cannot comment on the effect of such a cultivation of the habits of rote memory on the individual's character structure. That there is a relationship between the method of learning and the individual's attitude towards himself, and his interpretations of experience, is claimed by Bateson and Mead. They maintain that if the individual is brought up in habits of rote memory 'his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight'.[2] 156

It can also be shown than the interests and imagination of children are tied down to concrete things and events such as food, animals, ceremonies, farm work, and so forth. It was found that the majority of their responses to story completion, free drawings and in Rorschach testing were highly impregnated with concrete realism.[3] One cannot fail to notice that both 159

[1] Nadel, from his experiments with story recounting and responses to pictures on some children of those two tribes, concluded that a people possessing a highly developed realistic art and drama, and a rich, complicated, and rationalized religious system, is characterized in the field of psychological reaction by stress on rational elements, logical cohesion, and strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach as to what is presented to them. On the other hand, a people whose culture lacks such art and drama and whose religious beliefs are centred round abstract and impersonal principles, are psychologically different in the sense that they are more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, stressing unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts and meaning and rational consistency. 'A Field Experiment in Racial Psychology', in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXVIII, 1937–8, pp. 195–211.

R. H. Thouless, experimenting on the perception of twenty Indian students and a group of British students, concludes that the former group showed a significantly greater tendency towards 'phenomenal regression' to the real object than the latter group. For instance, in the case of the Indian students there was greater tendency for circular objects inclined to the observer to be drawn as wide ellipses, for parallel-sided objects with the sides receding from the observer to be represented as parallel, and for objects of the same real size at different distances to be drawn with very little difference in size. 'A Racial Difference in Perception', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 330–9.

[2] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *The Balinese Character*, p. 84.

[3] For typical examples of story completion and Rorschach responses, see appendices.

As to free drawings, the writer has on two occasions asked pupils in the compulsory school to draw whatever they wanted to, and the following is a list of the subjects drawn: oranges, girls carrying baskets on their heads, a boy tending sheep, a car and a palm tree, a boy riding a donkey and a car behind him, a girl feeding a chicken, fish, a car with people gathered around it, palm tree and water, two boys racing on donkey back, ducks, a house, a trader selling sugar to a girl, lemons, bananas and oranges, a man cutting sugar-cane, a boy climbing a palm tree, a girl beating a tambourine, a ceremonial procession near the mosque, a farewell procession for a pilgrim.

When I asked some of the children about their drawings, none of them told me of any plot in the drawing. They were purely representative of things and concrete events. The children's drawings were characterised by the almost entire absence of 'landscape' in [532]

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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[188] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[909] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
[744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[153] [1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the New Testament.

[183] [2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and purity.

[909] [3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee, those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

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administered only to eighty-five boys and girls chosen from each of the three grades in alphabetical order, as the administering of this test takes a relatively longer time. 125

The following table represents the frequency distribution of the intelligent quotient of the thirty-one boys and girls according to their scores in the Kabbani test. 153

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	2	4	6
40–49	1	1	2
50–59	6	3	9
60–69	3	4	7
70–79	2	4	6
80–89	1	0	1

The frequency distributions for the Porteus Maze and for the Pass-along tests are:

PORTEUS MAZE

I.Q.	*Frequency*		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	0	1
40–49	0	0	0
50–59	3	6	9
60–69	10	19	29
70–79	14	21	35
80–89	16	12	28
90–99	7	2	9
100–109	10	1	11
110–119	1	2	3
120–129	1	0	1
130–139	1	0	1

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PASS-ALONG

I.Q.	Frequency		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	3	4
40–49	0	1	1
50–59	0	2	2
60–69	0	8	8
70–79	3	8	11
80–89	1	9	10
90–99	11	2	13
100–109	11	10	21
110–119	8	3	11
120–129	2	1	3
130–139	1	0	1

For the results of test I the following remarks may be made concerning the interpretive significance of its scores.

1. As far as this small group of thirty-one boys and girls (with an average chronological age of eleven years eight months for boys, and eleven years four months for girls) is concerned, the results fall below the average norm of intelligence compared with urban children on whom the test was standardized.

2. The distribution in the sample, however, roughly follows the normal distribution.

3. Comparing boys and girls, the latter tend to have slightly higher scores on the whole than the boys.

For the results of tests II and III one notes that:

1. Unless the sample of test I happens to be of low intelligence (an assumption for which there is no apparent justification except the small number) tests II and III appear to be better tests than test I. In these tests children, including the sample in test I, have scored average and even superior I.Q.s. In test III, especially in the case of boys, the curve shows a skew towards the superior I.Q. tendency.

3. Boys on the whole have better scores in these performance tests than girls. In the Porteus Maze test only three girls out of sixty-three are above the average (100), while thirteen boys out of sixty-four fall above the average. In the Pass-along test the area representing boys of average or above average I.Q. is larger than that of the girls.

It is to be noted here that one of the boys who is mentally deficient and could not handle the test problems of the performance tests at all, is called 'Shaikh' (saint) by the rest of the school children. Among the adults there

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Among the adults there are in the village four people who may be considered by psychologists as insane or mentally deficient but are regarded as possessing a 'saintly touch'. However, the use of these three types of intelligence tests tends to indicate, apart from the difficulty of sampling, that the children have an intelligence of the practical type. The nature of the performance tests is perhaps nearer to the problems of their serious activities of everyday life. On the whole they scored better in Pass-along than Porteus.

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It is worth mentioning that some of the children who came out well in the performance tests did very badly with the verbal test, and this could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the children with the intellectual items of the latter. Apart from the mathematical items, this unfamiliarity could be demonstrated by item 8, Section 1. In it, the child is asked: 'If you want to give your mother a present what will you choose: a skipping rope, a toy, a silk stocking or a bicycle?' Although the obvious answer according to the test is 'silk stocking', which some children gave, others gave 'a skipping rope' or 'a bicycle' while none chose a toy. On asking a boy why he chose a bicycle, he answered that after giving it to his mother he would take it back for himself. Some of those who chose the rope thought that it was a useful thing for mother as she 'would hang the washing on it'. The difference of value-attitudes implied in such items and their influence on answers given, is similar to that classical example given by Klineberg with regard to one of the items of the 'National Intelligence Test' which was administered to some children of an Indian tribe. In this item the subject is presented with the words: crowd, closeness, danger, dust, excitement, number, and is asked to underline only two words which are the necessary characteristics of the crowd. Although 'closeness and number' are the correct answers according to the key of the test, yet many of the Indian children underlined danger and dust and in other cases excitement. According to their own logic and experience these answers seem to be the right ones.[1]

In our case the results of testing by a verbal test brings out the validity of applying tests standardized for urban children to rural children. By no means all the children who test the Kabbani test are mentally deficient, but the test itself is overweighted with items that are more suitable to city children, and may fail to sample adequately those abilities in which the rural children excel. In the United States and Britain studies of urban-rural differences in intelligence have revealed that rural children are neither uniformly nor consistently inferior to urban children on all tests.[2] Our small-scale testing tends to confirm the conclusion that while rural children score low in tests of abstract intelligence, they may excel in tests of the mechanical or practical type.

Although doubts could be cast on the quantitative results of tests that are not standardized for a particular community, such tests could be used

[1] Otto Klineberg, *Race and Psychology*, Unesco, Paris, 1951, p. 11.
[2] A. Anastasi and J. Foley, *Differential Psychology*, New York, 1949, pp. 825–7.

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●153 as instruments of differential qualitative analysis. Nadel expressed the view that intelligence tests 'in their specific adjustment to cultural groups would already reflect specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence'. Such an approach would not be so much concerned with assessing degrees of intelligence, as 'analysing types and qualities of intelligence'.[1] The concrete, matter-of-fact orientation of children's intelligence in Silwa did not only exhibit itself in the relatively better performance in the Pass-along test, but was also revealed in the ease in which their attention was engaged in the performance tests compared with the verbal one. Moreover, in the case of performance tests some boys and girls after getting stuck at some point in the testing asked me whether they could bring an older boy or girl who could help them or who could 'solve it better for me'. This attitude seems to be a reflection of the cultural pattern in which an older person is supposed to know better and hence should be consulted. [56]

It has become increasingly evident that experience in different cultures and even different socio-economic groups in one culture, may lead to basically different perceptual responses and lend different meanings to a similar test situation. Moreover, one cannot ignore the importance of cultural motivation in assessing test results and interpreting numbers and scores.

Japanese children have been found to excel American children significantly in tests involving sustained attention, visual perception or spatial orientation, while falling behind on verbal and arithmetic tests. It is also reported that Chinese groups excelled the Japanese in the Binet type of tests and in auditory memory span, while they scored lower in the Porteus Maze and in all performance and mechanical aptitude tests.[2]

[1] S. F. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, p. 197.

[2] Anastasi and Foley, op. cit., pp. 739–40. For the effect of cultural values on intelligence and other psychological tests, see Klineberg, op. cit. See also M. Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, where she mentions that the aesthetic interest of children in Samoa overshadowed the task of solving the test problems.

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ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds. The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psychological function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined, by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress*, p. 163.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye. 602 578 [154]

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation. 606 578 [582]

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action. 578 154 156

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success. 578 593 [587]

Another interesting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home.

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'.

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying),

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects.

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings. 865 858

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1] 865 593 152 [151]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents. 865 593 152 755 [154] [154]

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organisation of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. 220.

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he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognizes that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people. 867

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomized in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God. [561]

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3] 577

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the suppressed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347. [154]

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located. [826]

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills. 861 [825]

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure. [152] [154] 159

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

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159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

776 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [715] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [822] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking [828] too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

571 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 773 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially

responsible for the adult defense mechanisms of rivalry and caution.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

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We, however, made no detailed observations of play situations, and therefore cannot attempt to elaborate any particular theory about the psychological functions of play which cannot be pressed into any single formula.[1] Some of these theories will be woven into our argument to clarify certain points.

This is a plausible approach, since we are not mainly concerned with play in generic terms, but in its special relevance to a functional study. From our limited observations and the nature and procedures of games the following three conclusions emerge: boys' play is characterized by an enormous amount of toughness and roughness, bodily contacts, representing almost a challenge to the 'serious' adult world as evidenced in grown-ups driving away playing children from their surroundings;[2] secondly, one is struck by the degree of sexuality either in the use of obscene language in connection with games or in the phallic symbols in the games; thirdly, there is a relatively meagre social content, especially in the boys' games.

The element of sexuality about many of the games described could be viewed by psycho-analysts as an expression of the 'abreaction' function of play, through which the children grow out of the attitudes connected with the Oedipus situation (passive stage) into those of the mature adult (active stage). In other words, they are representations of the transition from mother attachment to the love-object. With little secondary elaboration of sexual themes in children's games in Silwa, one could find a strong confirmation of the 'abreaction theory of play', especially to what Roheim calls 'the separation type' of games (see games Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 8). In such games Roheim maintains that the child's separation from the mother is enacted in a group of symptomatic actions such as cleaving, pinching, binding and loosening; and in this way the child builds up defences against the mother's loss and castration anxiety.[3]

In another place Roheim maintains that the stage of latency (between five and ten) is also that of play in the child's growth, and the abundance of complicated elaboration of games in any society may be regarded as an index showing the depth and strength of this repression of sexuality at this stage. 'Varied and complicated games show that great quantities of genital libido are being diverted into other channels, i.e. sublimated.'

Taking such leads into consideration, one notices that the boys' games in Silwa are not characterized by any complications or secondary elaborations. In the light of psycho-analytical findings, the period of latency in Silwa as expressed in children's play and games does not witness the

[1] Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935. In Chapter I, she gives a masterly discussion of the various theories of play.

[2] A certain amount of roughness and aggression is a necessary element in play and games, but the games already described are extremely rough and uncouth, as the writer has attempted to show in the description of them. For the attitude of adults towards children's play, see Appendix IX, 'Moral Ideology Test'.

[3] Géza Roheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, p. 11. 'Children's Games and Rhymes in Duau (Normanby Island)', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

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*857 ●154 'latency' or repression of sexuality as reported by psycho-analysts.[1] On the contrary, till the ages of ten and eleven children give full swing to their rough and vulgar ways of talk in their games. Even if the period of latency is universal according to psycho-analysts, its layer of repression amongst Silwa boys during this stage is not more than skin-deep. This contrasts with girls' play where phrases or symbols of sexuality are hardly expressed. The difference is certainly a reflection of the social norms governing sex, and exerts pressure on girls earlier than on boys.

Looking at the play and games of boys in the general cultural context and the trends of process of growing up, their characteristic roughness and sexuality could be regarded as a reflection of the expressive and assertive way of dealing with equals in competitive situations. Moreover, it could also be regarded as the last fling of the children's group before the adult world makes them toe the line in the stage of adolescence. Perhaps in their resentment of the pressures of socialization, the children's group finds a healthy scope for letting off steam in their own play-life unsupervised and undirected by the requirements of their grown-ups. It is relevant to state here that free unorganized play amongst children is mainly characterized either by mimicking other children or ridiculing adults with physical deformities, especially the lame and the blind. In such ways children give vent to their feelings of aggression towards, and resentment of, the adults' world. In this way one can see that the roughness in the boys' games may be regarded as a safety-valve by which the pressures of adult authority are vented and thus relieved.

*857 869 It is to be asked to what extent the environment and the cultural conditions of the community determine, or at least predispose, the boys and girls in the village to maintain and appreciate the games they play. It cannot be mere accident that most of the games, especially boys' games, although co-operative within the team, are directed mainly in their execution towards a highly competitive goal. While it cannot be firmly established, there is a strong suggestion that the village's social structure, with the solidarity of family, clan, and division combined with the rivalry between the various families, clans and the two divisions, favours the adoption of such games.

Moreover, it is appropriate to ask to what extent maleness is connected with these boys' games in the sense that through the tough and rugged manner of play, boys gain their manly skill and endurance. In other words, to what extent can one consider these games as ways of testing boys' ability to take their part in the community which requires a demonstration of manhood by showing one's prowess in the games? With this, one also notices the quiet nature of the girls' games which is compatible with the female ethos in this community.

[1] G. Roheim, 'The Psycho-analysis of Primitive Cultural Types,' in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XIII.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Muktadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

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REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Questions of motivation, drive, adjustment, frustration, methods of learning, reaction to authority, modes of fantasy gratification, and the end-product of all these forces in the ego-structure are important elements in the study of personality. In this study it was discussed how the social disciplines contribute to produce submissive, obedient children who lack the spirit of enterprise and initiative. Adults continuously wean their offspring from flights of imagination and spontaneity of action till they almost completely achieve their end by the time their offspring reach adolescence. Mead emphasizes the importance of the cultural methods of socialization as: 'The child will have as an adult the imprint of his culture upon him whether his society hands him the tradition with a shrug, throws it at him like a bone to a dog, teaches him each item with care and anxiety or leads him towards manhood as if he were on a sight-seeing tour. But which method his society uses will have far-reaching results in the attitudes of the growing child, upon the way he phrases the process of growing up, upon the resentment or enthusiasm with which he meets the inevitable social pressure from the adult world.'[1] 156

One of the important psychological mechanisms in the personality of individuals in the community culture of Silwa is the conception of the power of fate, a mechanism which is found in many other peasant communities. According to Kardiner such a mechanism is a tendency to shift personal responsibility on to others or on to supernatural forces. The prevalence of such a tendency is a cultural mode of displacing dependency on parent-surrogates, and thus escaping blame and punishment. With belief in fate one can correlate the presence of very little anxiety about sickness, misfortunes such as divorce, and indifference to self-improvement. It could be said that conditions of closed economy, together with the stifling weight of social and parental pressures, may be considered as important factors in this projective mechanism of fate. In a masterly passage about the Tanala culture of Madagascar, Kardiner maintains that: 'The belief in fate—singularly effective in shunting direct envy and overt-hostility—is a monument to the underlying absolutism which characterizes the culture. It shifts the responsibility from those who actually have power or advantages and places it upon a kind of mechanistic conception of human destiny. The chief function of the belief is to compel the individual to accept his role in life, and not bother those who exploit him, though he is given some right to attempt to alter his fate by magic means. If this fails, he has only fate to blame.'[2] Such is an illustration of the contribution that psychology could make to deepen our understanding of social facts. 154

In this work certain methods and techniques of childhood and adolescent training systems were correlated with some aspects of the cultural behaviour of adults and some of the major trends in their personality structure. In discerning such correlations, functional ties between certain 155

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 168.
[2] A. Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, p. 314.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

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182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people 178 of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied [426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the [369] material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force [182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

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861 the continuity or discontinuity of disciplinary policy between infancy and childhood:

(1) Societies where infant and later disciplines are weak.
(2) Societies where infant and later disciplines are severe.
(3) Societies where infant disciplines are severe and later disciplines are weak.
(4) Societies where infant disciplines are weak, and later disciplines are severe.

Goldfrank continues to say: 'From the standpoint of logic these categories pose no problems. However, difficulties may arise when an attempt is made to assign specific societies to any one of them, for permissiveness and pressure are present at all stages of development.'[1] The writer feels that the child-rearing practices compared with infant practices could be classified, without much debate or appearance of subjectivity, into the fourth category of societies where infant disciplines are weak, permissive, and protective, while the later disciplines are prompt, strict, and on the whole, severe.

It has been shown in Chapter IV on infancy how the angelic children are treated permissively and with very few controls until they start to respond orally to the external world. Perhaps the only forbidden fruit in the mother's paradise for the child is the biting of her breast while he is suckling, which normally results in her withdrawal of the breast from him, and might be accompanied by some angry words or a push. On the other hand, we have noticed how the period of childhood is seized upon to discipline the child, and make him conform as well as know his position in the adult world.

155 In this connection, a question of a psychological nature could be asked. How does the child bridge the gap or adjust himself between the early permissive training and the stern childhood discipline without a complete disintegration of his personality? In answer to such a question, certain points must be remembered. The child receives the pressures of socialization, and forgoes his mother's blessings at a stage when he is capable of using his newly-developed interest, such as walking and talking, in his contacts with other children. The social arrangement of the extended family could be also considered as a factor in making up for the mother's deprivation. The rough and aggressive games are an outlet for the strain of socialization during childhood. The gap is also bridged through the integration of the child into the work of the adults. From the economic point of view, the child is continuously conditioned to participate in farm work as a responsible member. Through work in the fields, which is meaningful for the child and indispensable to his family, the child is incorporated in the family circle, and is recognized as a valuable member in it,

[1] Esther S. Goldfrank, 'Socialization, Personality and the Structure of the Pueblo Society', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, 1945, p. 517.

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and this contributes in no small way to the satisfaction of the individual's psychological need for social recognition.[1] These are some of the forces the writer regards as maintaining some sort of healthy effect in the growing up of children in Silwa; otherwise the strain of childhood would have been unbearable in a predominantly authoritarian community where the child is regarded as its father's possession. Erich Fromm would consider such a community as thwarting the child's legitimate strivings for freedom, independence, and self-fulfilment. He maintains that the social arrangement of an authoritarian patriarchal society, frustrating man's wishes to self-realization, tends to create in him a destructive passion, which in turn must be suppressed by external or internal force.[2] 155

If one thinks of the disciplinary policies of childhood in terms of a straight line, at one end of which is the easy-going discipline of some primitive societies, and at the other end the harsh discipline of a society like the Japanese, it is apparent that the type of discipline to be found in Silwa is closer to that of the Japanese society than to that of those primitive societies. [M]

The period of childhood is considered by the adult as an unimportant stage which should be quickly passed over. The writer seldom noticed grown-ups talking about their childhood, and his informants found it very difficult, even unbecoming, to recall their childhood days. The villagers' attitude towards children is indeed a mixed one, regarding them both as supernumerary entities as well as a sub-adult. A child is an economic asset as well as a social nuisance. It was shown in Chapter I how the child is continuously expected to take over from the adult the tasks which it is capable of performing as a part of its acquisition of discipline—'adab'. On the level of social action, however, it is supposed to be insignificant and to have no opinion of its own. On the whole, a son or a daughter, whether young or old, cannot replace the parent in performing formal social obligations; for example, taking gifts to circumcision and wedding ceremonies or entertaining a guest, unless there are extenuating circumstances which justify it. The child's world is always connected with the female world rather than the grown-up male world. In the ceremonial celebrations, children are usually mixed with women more than with men. If children happened to be in a male gathering, they must keep to their place, and be able to withdraw at the earliest opportunity to play on their own, or to join the female crowd. At this level of social action, the unity of the social sphere between children and grown-ups tends to break. Although the child's life is directed towards aims, responsibilities, and values similar 858

[1] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, pp. 47–8. See also Abram Kardiner in *The Individual and His Society*, where he emphasizes the emotional meaning of work: 'There is, first, the intrinsic gratification in work as a form of mastery. This must be credited with being a basic gratification. The satisfactions derived from it are common to all forms of mastery. They give the individual a feeling of effectiveness and control' (p. 30).

[2] Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, pp. 133–8.

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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

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On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well [155] explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and [156] hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive [576] insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself [162] from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling [155] rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 143.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

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One of the important psychological mechanisms in the personality of individuals in the community culture of Silwa is the conception of the power of fate, a mechanism which is found in many other peasant communities. According to Kardiner such a mechanism is a tendency to shift personal responsibility on to others or on to supernatural forces. The prevalence of such a tendency is a cultural mode of displacing dependency on parent-surrogates, and thus escaping blame and punishment. With belief in fate one can correlate the presence of very little anxiety about sickness, misfortunes such as divorce, and indifference to self-improvement. It could be said that conditions of closed economy, together with the stifling weight of social and parental pressures, may be considered as important factors in this projective mechanism of fate. In a masterly passage about the Tanala culture of Madagascar, Kardiner maintains that: 'The belief in fate—singularly effective in shunting direct envy and overt-hostility—is a monument to the underlying absolutism which characterizes the culture. It shifts the responsibility from those who actually have power or advantages and places it upon a kind of mechanistic conception of human destiny. The chief function of the belief is to compel the individual to accept his role in life, and not bother those who exploit him, though he is given some right to attempt to alter his fate by magic means. If this fails, he has only fate to blame.'[2] Such is an illustration of the contribution that psychology could make to deepen our understanding of social facts. 154

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[2] A. Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, p. 314.

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155 observed facts were noted by the writer, but no special effort was made to establish their causal relationships or irreversible sequences.[1]

In the light of this study, the psycho-analytical assumption of the relationship between some biological experiences in early childhood and certain adult character traits cannot be confirmed. It is difficult to reconcile, as in the case of the Navaho material, the adults' prevailing attitudes of suspicion, secretiveness, and high level of tension, with the permissive training of infants in breast-feeding, bodily affection and evacuation activities. If one takes the criteria of some psycho-analysts as the sole guide for personality formation, one would expect adults in this community to be cheerful folk, without much constraint in their personal relations, and free and easy in the communication of their innermost feelings and thoughts. One can infer from the data of this study that the experiences and disciplines of later childhood and adolescence are equally, if not more, important in the formation of personality structure of the adults. It is apparent from some sociological studies that to consider a particular experience as traumatic or not, or as favourable or unfavourable for individual adjustment, it must be regarded in relation to other aspects of child life, e.g. nutrition, health and sickness, economic conditions of life, and social disciplines.

From the Navaho studies, Kluckhohn concludes that psycho-analytical theorists are not wholly wrong, but they claim too much for the earliest years of life and do not pay enough attention to later events and to the total situation in which the individual matures.

'Infantile indulgence very probably does constitute the firmest foundation upon which, if late circumstances are reasonably favourable, a secure and confident adult personality can be developed. But it affords only a possible basis; it does not, of itself, promise fulfilment.'[2]

Such a conclusion was also supported by an experiment on rats in an attempt to evaluate the relationship between breast-feeding and acquisitiveness. Hunt experimented on albino rats to determine the effect of feeding-frustration in infancy and the tendency to hoard in adulthood. By comparing the number of pellets stored by two experimental sets of rats, one of which was subjected to periods of hunger, while the other was allowed unlimited feeding during infancy, he reached the following two main conclusions:

(1) The infantile feeding-frustration had no effect on the number of pellets hoarded, while both sets of adult animals were continuously satiated.

(2) The effect of infantile frustration on adult behaviour was shown by the fact that the experimental animals which had been frustrated in their

[1] See Simon Marcson, 'Some Methodological Consequences of Correlational Analysis in Anthropology', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

[2] C. Kluckhohn, 'Navaho Infancy and Childhood', in *Psycho-analysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, ed. by Géza Roheim, New York, 1947, p. 86.

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unlimited feeding during infancy hoarded more than two and a half times as many pellets as the other set in the post-frustration tests.[1] 155

It is possible to infer from the experiment on the rats that the early infantile experiences did not produce the expected trait unconditionally, but their fulfilment was contingent on later environmental conditions. It was hunger in these tests that made one set resort to its early experiences.

With the complexity of human needs and modes, the picture of the foundations of human personality becomes more complicated. But whether one follows the psycho-analytical interpretations or follows the framework of a learning theory based on the conditioning of attitudes and interests of children, one cannot ignore the important trends that are stamped on the individual's personality during his early stages of the process of growing up.

In this book, as stated in the introduction, the main concern has been with the general trends and attributes of personality in terms of predictable behaviour. Detailed case studies of individuals with differently constituted personality types would enrich and clarify such diffused and cross-cultural approach. This would reveal how different types of personalities face, handle, and react to the cultural realities, thus either achieving personal adjustment or becoming maladjusted.[2] No one should claim after reading this work that he knows exactly what to expeet from every individual in this community, or knows exactly how every one of its members behaves in every situation. The variety and variability of behaviour and action, with which we were not mainly concerned, must not be neglected. Moreover the subjective element and the 'personal equation' of any writer cannot be completely eliminated in the art of writing in social science. 121

This work represents, moreover, an attempt to study educational issues in the broadest sense of the term, as a function of the cultural tradition that is transmitted to each generation. The 'transmissive' and 'reproductive' role of education in managing and perpetuating cultural organization, maintaining law and order, ways of sanctioning custom and action, have been discussed in this small community. The writer submits that such a type of research is imperative in a society where there are two educational traditions in juxtaposition: the indigenous and the modern. An objective evaluation of the interrelationship between these two traditions must be based on studies of the local culture, as well as an analysis of the aims and achievements of the modern system of schools.[3]

[1] J. McV. Hunt, 'The Effects of Infant Feeding-Frustration upon Adult Hoarding in the Albino Rat', in *Contemporary Psycho-pathology*, ed. by Silvan S. Tomkins, Harvard University Press, 1947, pp. 423–44.

[2] Karen Horney maintains that the child in coping with the world in its process of growing up develops one of three basic strategies of life: it can move towards people, against them, or from them. *Our Inner Conflicts*, New York, 1945.

[3] A strong plea for studies on childhood and educational institutions on those lines has been advanced by Professor Margaret Read in her inaugural lecture on 'Education and Cultural Tradition'. See also her review of 'Umbundu Kinship and Character' by Gladwyn Murray Childs, in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, 1951.

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as other anthropologists, have viewed the efficacy of modern education in schools, and the problems that face the adolescent in the modern complex society. They have pointed out the gaps in modern education in the transmission of the cultural heritage, especially at the stage of adolescence, when transition from childhood dependence to adult independence is expected to take place.[1]

As far as Silwa is concerned, it has been shown how the child-training practices impress on the growing individual the social norms with certain dominant themes at different stages. It has also been noted that the child-training system reflects many of the social and psychological attitudes of adult behaviour. Attempts have been made throughout this work to discern some correlations between adult values and personality structure, and techniques of instilling children with 'adab'. Children begin to adopt some of the cultural values of the community even during childhood, e.g. assertive, aggressive, and rivalry attitudes towards other children, while there is submissive and obedient behaviour towards elders; observance of sex regulations and behaviour before puberty; the earlier attainment by girls of sociological maturity, and so on. It was also pointed out from observations, tests, dreams and Rorschach responses, that the children's flights of imagination are curbed at an early stage, thus making the children show striking interest in adult activities of farming, ceremonial celebrations, and kinship relations. The policy of child-training in Silwa sets the pattern of the social relations of individuals in their groupings, and incorporates them as well in the productive activities of the community.

Against such a background of the cultural tradition, one can draw certain conclusions. One can see the contributions that an educational institution may make in the social and economic life of a community. One can ascertain the difficulties encountered in its proper functioning. Furthermore, one can view in proper perspective the complex process which children undergo in adjusting themselves to school curriculum and its values on one hand and to the prevailing conditions of home training on the other.

Many educational thinkers have emphasized the importance of relating the school to the needs of the community. In this connection it is often assumed that elements in the educational content of a community could be transferred easily with benefit to the school curricula, providing stimulation, and provoking the interest of the learners. Such assumptions often ignore the new situation which has arisen out of the cultural contacts. Those who are thinking in such ways wishfully hope to recreate the past; but in their zeal they tend to ignore the basis of the community's educative forces.[2] In this community, for example, the inclusion in a reading book of some of the local fairy tales, or the inclusion of some of the children's games in the school, would be considered facetious and undignified by

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea*.
[2] See M. Read, review of Gladwyn M. Childs' book referred to earlier.

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forces, although here the interaction of the basic personality structure on the cultural institutions has not been worked out satisfactorily. His methodology of culture analysis on the criteria of security systems, sexual controls, points of tension, satisfaction of dependency cravings, social disciplines, fantasy gratification provides possible and feasible 'pegs' for constellations of human behaviour. It also provides a scope for a better understanding of certain universal features of culture, such as dreams and folklore, in a functional way, by establishing their linkage with other cultural constellations.[1] Thus, in this work, many of Kardiner's constructs have been utilized for the explanation of certain aspects of our data, especially in connection with folk and children's tales, dreams, food anxieties, and sexual behaviour.

The field methods used in this study are those of the current anthropological repertory depending mainly on hearing and seeing through participant observation, informants, and asking questions of many adults and children on certain problems and to check data given by informants.[2] For information about children, the Kuttabs and the elementary school were available centres together with a 'children's hour' organized in the writer's house to which children between seven and twelve years old came on three occasions. It was impossible to stimulate adolescent interest in such a gathering, partly because of their economic responsibilities, and partly because of their excessive shyness and reserve, and this perhaps accounts for the thinness of our observations concerning this age group. Intelligence tests, Stewart Emotional Response, Moral Ideology, Story Completion and Rorschach tests, were administered to children, with the exception of the last test which included adults as well.

A preliminary statement about the choice of certain psychological tests is necessary here to indicate the extent of their relevance to our study. The Moral Ideology, the Emotional Response, and the Story Completion tests are intended to reveal some of the norms and the attitudes which children acquire at various stages of development and some of their

as restricting individual impulses for the purposes of social action. See Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, London, 1947, p. 31. Freud has emphasized the inhibitory and restrictive forces of culture (Super-Ego). See his book *Civilization and its Discontents*.

[1] For criticisms of the Kardiner-Linton approach see S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 403–8; Henry Ozanne, 'Synthesis in Social Sciences', in *Sociometry*, Vol. VIII, 1945, pp. 208–15, where he maintains that Kardiner's interpretations of the primitive cultures studied, though feasible and meaningful, are only possible explanations and are not necessarily ones arising from the material concerned. As a psychologist he, like some anthropologists, objects to the superimposition of psychological categories, conceptualized in terms of the individual, on sociology, which conceptualizes in terms of the group. See also L. M. Hanks in his review of Kardiner, 'The Individual and His Society', *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. XII, 1940, p. 475, where he emphasizes the importance of behaviour and attitudes falling outside the range defined by institutional behaviour.

[2] For an assessment of my informants, see Appendix I. See also Audrey T. Richards, 'The Development of Field Work Methods in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett, London, 1939.

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125 reactions and sentiments for different situations. These tests are also expected to draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape his notice.

The Projective Test of the Rorschach Ink Blots is growing in popularity as a technique in field work especially amongst those anthropologists who are concerned with the relations between culture and personality. The test is intended to reveal 'the basic organization of the personality structure, including the fundamental affective and cognitive features of mental life'.[1] In spite of many difficulties and limitations in applying such a test, some Rorschach researchers, working with anthropologists, have noted that the principles of the test could be applied with some validity in cross-cultural situations.[2]

Our purpose in administering Intelligence tests was not primarily for inter-group comparisons, but mainly to elicit information regarding the mental 'orientation' characteristic of the group. Three types of tests were selected, verbal (Kabbani's test for primary school children), a paper and pencil test (Porteus Maze), and a practical performance test (Alexander's pass-along). The assumption is that the significant differences in the score of these tests would be considered as different adjustment to different test material and situations. This could be legitimately regarded as reflection of specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence. In a study of the effects of culture upon children's thoughts and actions, these data are deemed relevant to our purposes.[3]

124 Our methods lack the sociological depth afforded by the gathering of life histories, and intensive case studies of families and individuals supplementing a more diffused and general study of a greater number of individuals. Resistance was expected and encountered in such attempts, even with my informants as shown in Appendix I. Various reasons can be given for such resistance. They were ill at ease at doing things for research, reluctant to engage in an activity which might be considered as dangerous gossip, especially when recorded on paper, and might reach official circles. [156] Their attitude is that personal problems should be 'covered' and not 'exposed' to others. Perhaps their interest was not sufficiently stimulated, for they would ask me, 'And what is the use of all this to us?' It became 123 obvious to me during my field work that in order to get the full co-operation of the people for such research, it was necessary to be able to help them in their everyday problems. One villager expressed this in a candid way: 'You must now be useful to us as we have been helpful to you.' A similar observation has been made by Oscar Lewis, who advocates, on the basis of his experience in Tepoztlan, the combination of research

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*, New York, 1946 edition, p. ix.
[2] Cora du Bois, *The People of Alor*, University of Minnesota Press, 1944, p. 589.
[3] S. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, pp. 184–97. For a full account of these tests and their application and findings, see Appendices.

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and service programmes as an excellent way of integrating the fields of both applied and theoretical Anthropology.[1] This constraint and fear of divulging personal information could be also attributed to the vulnerability of the villagers' ego-structure, to which we shall refer later.[2] 123 156

What relevance have such assumptions and approach to a study in education? A great part of the answer to such a question must be obvious by now. If education, in its broadest sense, is the process of transmitting the cultural contents, values, attitudes, and the body of technical and social experience from one generation to another, surely the sociological approach is of the greatest value in educational research and educational policies. As Sir Fred Clarke expressed it, culture is the whole life-medium, and not the background with which education is concerned.[3] Formal educational institutions, from schools to universities, are only one transmissive agent of any nation's 'way of life'. Our approach does not preclude the assumption that they are amongst the most efficient means of such transmission or that they are also a potent force in effecting social change. Here we are mainly concerned with education as the means of cultural continuity, of building social solidarity and cohesion. It is probably because of uncritical faith in schools and other formal educational institutions that this transmissive role of education has been ignored. This is vaguely felt when some educationists go to the extreme and advocate leaving children absolutely free for the development of their peculiarities of interest and behaviour. Such are rightly designated as cranks. Apart from those who entertain the ideas of Rousseau's Emile, 'we are well aware that children learn their patterns of social behaviour, their ideas on family life and earning a living, their value systems in relation to social and economic life, far more extensively and intensively outside school than inside'.[4] Society thus keeps itself as a going concern by educating its individuals to its established and time-tested ways of believing, feeling, thinking, and reacting for purposes of social action.[5] 121

Looking at education from this viewpoint may perhaps be disheartening to those educational planners and administrators who are anxious to go

[1] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Introduction, p. xv.

[2] Differences between cultures are also reflected in the varying ease with which field workers could procure life-histories. This point was brought to my attention by Cora du Bois who mentioned to me the striking difference in this connection between the flow of the Navaho and the constraint of the Alorese. Of course, my informants, being related to me, would not have accepted money, but perhaps other services. In such a community, people would not accept financial recompense for information given to one from the village itself. In case of an outsider, such payment might be a good incentive in a community which jealously guards against the divulging of personal and family privacies. For motivation of informants see S. F. Nadel, 'The Interview in Social Anthropology', in *The Study of Society*, ed. by F. C. Bartlett. [124]

[3] Sir Fred Clarke, *Freedom in the Educative Society*, London, 1948.

[4] Paper read by M. Read before the Education Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Edinburgh, August, 1951.

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man*, New York, 1949, p. 188.

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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [594] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [461]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertilizer he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, 613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is 682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call 627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be [779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is 156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com- 182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. 561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as [791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out- 561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the 888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship [576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, 562 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife [831] and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands [264] after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the [156] wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes cer- [462] tain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. [231] She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

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about them without going into any argument. The Karamsha, however, who were the accusers, opposed the suggestion and insisted on their ease being heard, and consequently their rights being acknowledged. The argument was stated by the head of the Karamsha speaking and being interrupted by members of the disputing house here and there, as well as by members of his house. Then Hag Ahmad 'Imran began to defend his case, and then free argument took place.

One of the most effective devices in the Arab councils is the so-called 'mulakah' (a getting together), where on any dilemma in the course of argument, one or two persons from the mediators take one person or more from the disputing sides for a 'mulakah' to persuade him in a corner, or another room away from the general meeting, through personal and more intimate hearing to follow what the mediators proposed. Their usual form of pressure is to appeal to the person to 'consider the Arabs, or the people, or his kinsfolk'. The idea behind this device is to avoid any personal embarrassment or retreat in public, as this brings shame ('ar). If the retreat is accepted on a more intimate level, then the person has retreated owing to the pressure brought upon him because of personal ties or to his considerations to the 'Arabs', yet such a formulation of retreat is only implicit.

However, the 'mulakah' which occurred three times during the meeting did not produce the required effects. The Hasaballab, the arbitrating clan, had then to go outside by themselves to agree on 'the rights of the Arabs which no one now should fear to declare'.

The formulation of the verdict is very interesting as an index of the functioning elements of the social structure. The Hasaballab declared two decisions; the first was that Hag Ahmad 'Imran committed a double wrong by slapping 'Othman the camel-driver, and by not preventing, even by slapping, his son from getting entangled with 'Othman. The second decision was that the clan of 'Amrab, to which the two disputing families belong, had committed a mistake by not mediating between the two families in due time.

As the disputants are morally compelled to accept the arbitration of whoever they agree upon to take this part, the 'Amareen had to shake hands with the Karamsha, followed by all present reading the Fatiha.

Yet this was not the end of everything in this Arab council. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, feeling that injustice had been done to him, immediately declared that he 'claimed rights from Hasaballab', meaning that he wanted to sue the arbitrating clan before another clan, a charge which they have to accept. The case now is between the 'Amareen and the Hasaballab, and they both agreed to appoint the 'Awadallab clan in the neighbouring village to take up the arbitration between them.[1] If the Hasaballab's verdict is considered unjust, they have to pay the 'Amareen

[1] If any clan or family is appealed to by both disputing parties for arbitration, it cannot refuse to act.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye. 602 578 [154]

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation. 606 578 [582]

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action. 578 154 156

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success. 578 593 [582]

Another interesting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
852 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
867 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[152] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between
[764] the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies,
[152] and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

852 During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
154 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[759] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 39.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension. Fear, moreover, is an efficient lever for the maintenance of social cohesion in the pattern of father-son relationship, and hence it is not surprising to find the common saying that 'fear is a blissful thing' (al khof baraka). 577 [156]

The popular sayings connected with the administering of punishment are also varied and inconsistent, perhaps to maintain a balance and to avoid excess. On the one hand one hears phrases such as 'If you don't beat the child, nothing good would come out of him', 'The stick is for the disobedient', 'Those who do not feel, the stick would make them feel'. On the other hand, there are other sayings such as 'The stick makes the boy dumb'. 'The threat would have no effect on those who do not obey spontaneously', It is considered, however, that childhood is the most appropriate period for punishing and disciplining the child. It is said that the child during this time is like the maize plant in its second irrigation (this irrigation is considered to be important for the plant's growth and is preceded by the pulling out of the grass and other weeds). The concentration of punishment at this period is justified on the grounds that the boy or the girl at this stage is neither too young nor too old to learn. The only form of corporal punishment administered to adolescents on some rare occasions is slapping. 861

However, the administering of punishment by parents to children is checked from being unduly excessive by other relatives, neighbours or other adults who happen to be present. Mediation (literally separation—'hajazat') as institutionalized in the 'Arab council' is an important force in the legal and social functioning of the community.[1] It is practised by children themselves and even mock fights are sometimes played by them to enjoy the wranglings of conciliation similar to those amongst the adults. Some children told me that on seeing their parents quarrelling, they immediately go out of the house to invite one of their close relatives for mediation. Adults are also expected to stop children's fights if they happen to be passing by, and even punish the disputants.[2] [857] [578]

It is appropriate here to evaluate the period of childhood in Silwa, in comparison with their period of infancy. With the exception of observing sex and religious norms, childhood in Silwa is the period through which a boy or a girl experiences a great number of the pressures of socialization. Some modern anthropologists have pointed out the importance of discontinuities or inconsistencies in child-rearing practices as relevant cultural data especially in connection with personality organization.[3] Esther Goldfrank, for instance, postulates four categories of societies with regard to

[1] See Chapter II. [2] See Appendix X, 'Story Completion'.
[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning', in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. by Kluckhohn and Murray, p. 474.

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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

*857 539 On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well [155] explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and [156] hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive [576] insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself [762] from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling [155] rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 145.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

The writer is however aware that his surmise concerning the stimulation of memory in the village's culture is neither fully documented nor based on experimental data as was that of Nadel's experiments to ascertain the differences in cognitive processes between the school children of the two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe.[1] 153

Moreover, the writer cannot comment on the effect of such a cultivation of the habits of rote memory on the individual's character structure. That there is a relationship between the method of learning and the individual's attitude towards himself, and his interpretations of experience, is claimed by Bateson and Mead. They maintain that if the individual is brought up in habits of rote memory 'his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight'.[2] 156

It can also be shown than the interests and imagination of children are tied down to concrete things and events such as food, animals, ceremonies, farm work, and so forth. It was found that the majority of their responses to story completion, free drawings and in Rorschach testing were highly impregnated with concrete realism.[3] One cannot fail to notice that both 159

[1] Nadel, from his experiments with story recounting and responses to pictures on some children of those two tribes, concluded that a people possessing a highly developed realistic art and drama, and a rich, complicated, and rationalized religious system, is characterized in the field of psychological reaction by stress on rational elements, logical cohesion, and strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach as to what is presented to them. On the other hand, a people whose culture lacks such art and drama and whose religious beliefs are centred round abstract and impersonal principles, are psychologically different in the sense that they are more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, stressing unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts and meaning and rational consistency. 'A Field Experiment in Racial Psychology', in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXVIII, 1937–8, pp. 195–211.

R. H. Thouless, experimenting on the perception of twenty Indian students and a group of British students, concludes that the former group showed a significantly greater tendency towards 'phenomenal regression' to the real object than the latter group. For instance, in the case of the Indian students there was greater tendency for circular objects inclined to the observer to be drawn as wide ellipses, for parallel-sided objects with the sides receding from the observer to be represented as parallel, and for objects of the same real size at different distances to be drawn with very little difference in size. 'A Racial Difference in Perception', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 330–9.

[2] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *The Balinese Character*, p. 84.

[3] For typical examples of story completion and Rorschach responses, see appendices.

As to free drawings, the writer has on two occasions asked pupils in the compulsory school to draw whatever they wanted to, and the following is a list of the subjects drawn: oranges, girls carrying baskets on their heads, a boy tending sheep, a car and a palm tree, a boy riding a donkey and a car behind him, a girl feeding a chicken, fish, a car with people gathered around it, palm tree and water, two boys racing on donkey back, ducks, a house, a trader selling sugar to a girl, lemons, bananas and oranges, a man cutting sugar-cane, a boy climbing a palm tree, a girl beating a tambourine, a ceremonial procession near the mosque, a farewell procession for a pilgrim.

When I asked some of the children about their drawings, none of them told me of any plot in the drawing. They were purely representative of things and concrete events. The children's drawings were characterized by the almost entire absence of 'landscape' in [532]

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875 the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

872 Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers [156] from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which [264] started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[262] [2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

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182 evaluate such institutions purely from the point of view of their immediate economic rationality and not as means of 'mutual adjustment of purposes in a total situation'. In such above-mentioned occasions, one can hardly fail to note the social values connected with prestige and the elements of reciprocity embodied in these forms of celebrations. Moreover, one cannot ignore the validity of their educative and cohesive functions. Since reciprocity is one of the major stabilizing forces in this community, its importance requires 'spinning out', since 'a solitary presentation of the principle would be ineffective'.[1] The economic method of interpreting social phenomena is one devised by particular workers as a means of considering such phenomena in the light of their particular field, and cannot be accepted as the whole or the sole explanation. The rationality of ceremonies and the functionalism of the extended family must be interpreted in the light of the community's social ends. In this connection, Firth remarks that '. . . economic activity is subordinate to social ends. It is only by studying those ends that one can see how particular economic systems work'.[2] It was pointed out how social and religious values render dealing in usury, or acceptance of compensation, repulsive to the moral code of this community. On the other hand, social prestige and rivalry
[578] combined with a weak ego-structure would explain why law-suits about land or other quarrels can be pursued with seemingly endless effort and expense, to the extent that such procedures might cost both sides more than the market value of the object under dispute.

Failure to assess social facts in their total cultural perspective has often
178 militated against the best intentions of reformers. Compulsory education
182 in terms of abolishing illiteracy has yielded negligible results, as shown earlier, even compared with the expenditure allocated to it. It has been related to neither the cultural needs nor the technical skills required in rural communities. Campaigns against infectious diseases must take into account the fact that, to the villagers, fear of contagion is subordinate to the rendering of reciprocal social obligation connected with sickness. The preference for reserving and offering the 'best food' to guests or strangers rather than be eaten by the members of the family for its 'nutritional value' must be viewed and understood first in terms of 'the people's values' concerning hospitality and generosity.

The adherence to traditional customs, beliefs, ways of thinking and
178 living is the basis of the peasants' psychological security. That peasants
● [156] rigidly adhere to their traditions and do not listen to 'reason' as explained to them by scientists or government officials has its root cause in this

[1] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 400. It is worth noting that in this community, as well as in many other parts of Egypt, the standardized social comments are legion as are also the respective responses in occasions of work, eating, drinking, building a house, after having a haircut, after toilet, on wearing new clothes, after having a bath, and on many other occasions for which good manners necessitate a particular
[576] expression or ejaculation and responding to it in a particular way.

[2] R. Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, p. 153.

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571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.[1]

156 The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations. [500] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.[2] The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.[3]

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.[4]

[1] This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

[2] With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand [195] a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Psychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284-302.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

[4] Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

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REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Questions of motivation, drive, adjustment, frustration, methods of learning, reaction to authority, modes of fantasy gratification, and the end-product of all these forces in the ego-structure are important elements in the study of personality. In this study it was discussed how the social disciplines contribute to produce submissive, obedient children who lack the spirit of enterprise and initiative. Adults continuously wean their offspring from flights of imagination and spontaneity of action till they almost completely achieve their end by the time their offspring reach adolescence. Mead emphasizes the importance of the cultural methods of socialization as: 'The child will have as an adult the imprint of his culture upon him whether his society hands him the tradition with a shrug, throws it at him like a bone to a dog, teaches him each item with care and anxiety or leads him towards manhood as if he were on a sight-seeing tour. But which method his society uses will have far-reaching results in the attitudes of the growing child, upon the way he phrases the process of growing up, upon the resentment or enthusiasm with which he meets the inevitable social pressure from the adult world.'[1] 156

One of the important psychological mechanisms in the personality of individuals in the community culture of Silwa is the conception of the power of fate, a mechanism which is found in many other peasant communities. According to Kardiner such a mechanism is a tendency to shift personal responsibility on to others or on to supernatural forces. The prevalence of such a tendency is a cultural mode of displacing dependency on parent-surrogates, and thus escaping blame and punishment. With belief in fate one can correlate the presence of very little anxiety about sickness, misfortunes such as divorce, and indifference to self-improvement. It could be said that conditions of closed economy, together with the stifling weight of social and parental pressures, may be considered as important factors in this projective mechanism of fate. In a masterly passage about the Tanala culture of Madagascar, Kardiner maintains that: 'The belief in fate—singularly effective in shunting direct envy and overt-hostility—is a monument to the underlying absolutism which characterizes the culture. It shifts the responsibility from those who actually have power or advantages and places it upon a kind of mechanistic conception of human destiny. The chief function of the belief is to compel the individual to accept his role in life, and not bother those who exploit him, though he is given some right to attempt to alter his fate by magic means. If this fails, he has only fate to blame.'[2] Such is an illustration of the contribution that psychology could make to deepen our understanding of social facts. 154

In this work certain methods and techniques of childhood and adolescent training systems were correlated with some aspects of the cultural behaviour of adults and some of the major trends in their personality structure. In discerning such correlations, functional ties between certain 155

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 168.
[2] A. Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, p. 314.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[P.240 is blank]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Eight

THE STEWART EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TEST

SAMPLES OF TEST RESPONSES

125 Tests have been recently adopted by some social anthropologists:

1. To provide quick means for collecting useful material in relatively little time.
2. To draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape notice.
3. To be used as an objective check on one's own impressions, especially in the field of culture-personality relationship.
4. To provide means of quantitative analysis.

Tests, however, must be interpreted in their cultural context. Leighton and Kluckhohn assert that tests hold considerable promise in anthropological research, but owing to their present state of imperfection, must be used in conjunction with material obtained by the usual anthropological techniques of observation and interview.[1]

1. The Stewart Emotional Response Test

159 125 This test is a series of questions asking for experiences associated with five emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and shame, one question asking for the best thing that could happen to the child, and another asking for the worst that could happen.[2] After administering the test on twelve children, the responses of the following five children were chosen on the grounds of being the most complete performance. Three boys disclaimed their experience of such emotions, while others gave confused answers.

No girls' responses are recorded here. I found them most frustrating in [156] this respect, except in the Rorschach ink-blots. Young girls were 'giggly'; older ones were shy and uneasy. Their way out was 'I don't know; I am not a man'. They probably refused to co-operate because the tests were first administered on the boys from whom they heard about them. After

[1] D. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *Children of the People*, p. 227.
[2] Ibid., p. 247.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

responsible for the adult defence mechanism of rigidity and caution. However, one of the well-known characteristics of the Egyptian fellah is his stubbornness, obstinacy and tenacity, which sometimes take the form of an obsession.

Connected with producing fear in the children is the violent and bad-tempered manner in which adults administer punishment to them. Punishment, however, may be in the form of fulminations or curses, or it may be corporal. As mentioned earlier, a father may curse his son by saying 'Curse on your father; a curse on your people; a curse on your origin (seed)', and so on. It seems that such curses have their effect on the children. A child of about nine years old told me that the curse of his parents, especially that of his mother, when she uncovers her head, is a thing which he tries to avoid; one cannot enter Paradise if one invokes one's parents' anger, and their blessings increase one's span of life. Punishment can also take the form of denouncing the boy as a girl, or condemning him as a homosexual, and also through depriving him of his food or his share of meat. On certain occasions, if the child shows reluctance to comply with, or to conform to, its elders' commands, they impugn one of its senses by expressing their disapproval or reproach in phrases such as, 'Aren't you listening?' 'Haven't you got eyes to see?' 'Are you blind?' 'Don't you smell?' 'Don't you feel?' 'Haven't you got blood?' Such phrases imply that the child should have done the accepted thing without being prompted, because he has only to make use of one of his senses. It is occasionally pointed out to the child that his jaw which uttered the words, or his hand that committed the offence, or his ears that heard the unpermissible, should be punished.

Corporal punishment is not uncommon either by beating, striking, whipping or slapping. Such punishment is inflicted upon the child normally after he has committed a serious misdemeanour, such as talking back at his parents while being rebuked, throwing stones at his mother, causing trouble with the neighbours' children, or on complaints being made against him by an older person. The child's ambivalent attitude towards its parents or uncles expresses itself in its appeal for their mercy when it is thrashed by one of them. He makes a screaming appeal, by crying out: 'O father, O father, by the name of the Prophet, O father', even if the father himself happens to be the one who is thrashing him.

The mother invariably gets the worst of the child's temper, aggression and disobedience, and consequently she is apt to administer punishment more frequently than the father. She is the parent with whom the child comes into active contact in terms of give and take. The child feels her punishing powers as he breaks things, loiters on being sent on an errand, loses money which he was given to buy things from the shop, or when he makes himself a nuisance when visitors are in the house, and similar other misdemeanours. Having more contacts with children's problems of upbringing, the mother tends to be the target of their ambivalence; they

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

Another tentative psychological explanation of fairy tales and folk tales in their social setting is advanced by Bartlett. He argues that the details and plots of such stories are usually derived from social customs and institutions. As social products, their psychological interest lies in ascertaining which of the three dominant tendencies of the instinctive social relationships, comradeship, assertiveness, and submissiveness, figure largely in them. In determining which of these instinctive tendencies takes first place in its expression in folklore, the cultural conditions and the external environment may be regarded as one of the most important factors. Thus in the folk tales, one could detect an expression of 'the preferred persistent social group tendencies' which could also be found in other fields of the same group's culture.[1]

Looking at these stories from such an angle, one can claim that the majority reflect 'assertive instinctive tendencies'. In story I the cock, which is the weakest of all the other animals mentioned, stands as the sole authority for information; in II the cock and the goat triumph over the donkey; in III the billy-goat asserts himself over the wolf; in V the cock (symbolizing the child) won the day with all those he dealt with; in VII the fox managed to laugh at the fisherman; in IX the boy succeeds in eloping with the chief's daughter; in X the nanny-goat scorches the wolf; in XI the scabby orphan boy asserts himself by having access to things which his uncle does not know and proves to be trickier than his uncle's wife; in XIV the poor boy and his sister get rid of their cousins who were richer and numerous; in the three Goha stories, XV, XVII, XVIII, the ridiculous and insignificant man asserts himself over his enemies and those who ridicule him. In story XVI he failed because of his profanity, for which he was deprived of his money.[2]

Following Bartlett's hypothesis, we find that the assertive instinctive tendencies loom large in most of these stories and could be regarded as 'the preferred response' in the group. This conclusion corresponds largely to our interpretations in the light of Kardiner's formulations. The weak, the insignificant, and the ordinary asserts its identity and becomes, through fantasy, as equivalent or even superior to the more fortunate and the more powerful. The link between 'assertiveness' as an over-reaction to an ego structure sensitive to being outdone or to feeling of inferiority is confirmed by the findings of clinical psychology.

In this connection, it is not without significance that one of the first phrases that the child learns to speak is 'May God curse your father', as a retort encouraged by his parents to anyone who may try to humiliate him.

[1] For F. C. Bartlett's views, I relied on the summary given in E. J. Lindgren, op. cit., pp. 358–66.

[2] In this connection the evidence from folklore and proverbs confirms Westermarck's observation that amongst the Moors God is always mentioned in a reverent manner. 'There is nothing of that familiarity or jocularity which is frequent in European sayings referring to Him, causing annoyance to puritanic writers.' *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 51.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

882 functions and the impact of this standardization on the basic personality structure and social institutions.[1] In the light of this statement, the social disciplines connected with sexuality are relevant data, and according to Kardiner, of great significance in understanding the basic personality structure and in explaining partly the nature of primary institutions.

It seems that in Silwa the process of socialization is similar in many points to that amongst the Tallensi and the Samoans, with regard to the continuity of the inculcated social norms and the spheres of adult and child activities.[2] Unlike many Western societies, youth in Silwa do not express in their attitudes that sense of being torn between youthful autonomy and parental insistence on dependence. This problem does not seem to be disturbing to parents and would seem abhorrent to youth who like to demonstrate their allegiance to their family and clan. Even if such desire for autonomy is occasionally expressed by boys, who on disagreement with their parents desert them for some relatives in another village or go to town to work, this is considered to be the exception, and of course such a desertion can never be entertained by girls. The lack of such strong desire could be explained by the security the youth derives from his status in his family and his need to be married by his parents.

Psychologically, however, adolescent boys, and more so adolescent [157] girls, impressed the writer as being on the whole timid, apprehensive and withdrawn. These traits stand out more clearly if compared with children's groups. Attitudes of initiative, self-assertion and drive seem to be the exception in adolescent behaviour.[3] In attempting to account for such general characteristics, the writer does not claim them to be the negative phase of the adolescent stage. He attributes their striking appearance to the cumulative effect of the severe social disciplines, and especially those connected with sex. The maturing of sex functions at this stage is noted [831] with great embarrassment, shame and feeling of guilt by adolescents. As mentioned before, complete hush and excessive secrecy prevails over sexual matters among adolescents as well as adults. This seems to contrast sharply with free bodily gratification given to the infants. There is no word for masturbation in the villagers' dialect. Sexual pleasure of any kind outside the marriage tie is condemned by the text of the Koran, as mentioned earlier.

[834] Manifestations of this excessive repression and fear of sex are obvious in the veiling of adolescent girls and women and the hiding of the breast

[1] Richard T. Sollinberger, 'The Concept of Adolescence', in *The Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 36, 1939, pp. 600–1. A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*.

[2] For adolescence and puberty as treated in different societies, see also Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Chapter II.

[3] This is the writer's general impression and could only be substantiated by comprehensive recording of the behaviour of adolescents. According to Fortes, however, 'for most problems of social anthropology, variations are of minor importance as compared with the "typical". For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance.' *Patterns of Culture*, p. 8.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder. One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[172]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

×539 I said: With his own money!
152 They said: He eats sweets —
I said: May they agree with him!
They said: He is ill-natured —
10 I said: Who has laid hold of him?
Be gone, you jealous creatures,
And cease your talk!
Unless you do, you will learn that his glance
Vanquishes everyone who lays hold of him!

3. He is an effeminate fop! The dyeing of certain portions of the hands and feet, with the leaves of the henna shrub (Lawsonia inermis), customary among the women and children, is considered, when practiced by men, a sign of effeminacy. [302] [157]

5. He is a dandy.

7. He has a sweet-tooth.

10. That is to say: Who provoked him? He must have had cause for being unpleasant. Maḥmûd interpreted this line as: "min fikum misik fi" that is to say, "Which of you has laid hold of him."

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX XII

Among the adults there are in the village four people who may be considered by psychologists as insane or mentally deficient but are regarded as possessing a 'saintly touch'. However, the use of these three types of intelligence tests tends to indicate, apart from the difficulty of sampling, that the children have an intelligence of the practical type. The nature of the performance tests is perhaps nearer to the problems of their serious activities of everyday life. On the whole they scored better in Pass-along than Porteus.

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808
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It is worth mentioning that some of the children who came out well in the performance tests did very badly with the verbal test, and this could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the children with the intellectual items of the latter. Apart from the mathematical items, this unfamiliarity could be demonstrated by item 8, Section 1. In it, the child is asked: 'If you want to give your mother a present what will you choose: a skipping rope, a toy, a silk stocking or a bicycle?' Although the obvious answer according to the test is 'silk stocking', which some children gave, others gave 'a skipping rope' or 'a bicycle' while none chose a toy. On asking a boy why he chose a bicycle, he answered that after giving it to his mother he would take it back for himself. Some of those who chose the rope thought that it was a useful thing for mother as she 'would hang the washing on it'. The difference of value-attitudes implied in such items and their influence on answers given, is similar to that classical example given by Klineberg with regard to one of the items of the 'National Intelligence Test' which was administered to some children of an Indian tribe. In this item the subject is presented with the words: crowd, closeness, danger, dust, excitement, number, and is asked to underline only two words which are the necessary characteristics of the crowd. Although 'closeness and number' are the correct answers according to the key of the test, yet many of the Indian children underlined danger and dust and in other cases excitement. According to their own logic and experience these answers seem to be the right ones.[1]

In our case the results of testing by a verbal test brings out the validity of applying tests standardized for urban children to rural children. By no means all the children who took the Kabbani test are mentally deficient, but the test itself is overweighted with items that are more suitable to city children, and may fail to sample adequately those abilities in which the rural children excel. In the United States and Britain studies of urban-rural differences in intelligence have revealed that rural children are neither uniformly nor consistently inferior to urban children on all tests.[2] Our small-scale testing tends to confirm the conclusion that while rural children score low in tests of abstract intelligence, they may excel in tests of the mechanical or practical type.

Although doubts could be cast on the quantitative results of tests that are not standardized for a particular community, such tests could be used

[1] Otto Klineberg, *Race and Psychology*, Unesco, Paris, 1951, p. 11.
[2] A. Anastasi and J. Foley, *Differential Psychology*, New York, 1949, pp. 825–7.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition. [758]

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

111	12	57	121
18	7	4	8
5	19	109	2
3	6	40	19

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

754 789 158

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue.

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.
[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F 754 789 158 [586] F 754 158

over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *ʿomdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

F [789]

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

F 692 754

I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

F 754 789

To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
.MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F
extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle
●158 Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering
[969] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and
[152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral,
766 and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to
778 the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140)
[969] for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to
769 the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first
688 removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple
[586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains 164
chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such 753
as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the " treatment " 755
of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria [756]
in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is " cured."

The explanation given of these " cures " is that sciatica is a 753
disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming 755
drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that [158]
imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845 776]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills. 861 [825]

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure. [152] [154] 159

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

The writer is however aware that his surmise concerning the stimulation of memory in the village's culture is neither fully documented nor based on experimental data as was that of Nadel's experiments to ascertain the differences in cognitive processes between the school children of the two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe.[1] 153

Moreover, the writer cannot comment on the effect of such a cultivation of the habits of rote memory on the individual's character structure. That there is a relationship between the method of learning and the individual's attitude towards himself, and his interpretations of experience, is claimed by Bateson and Mead. They maintain that if the individual is brought up in habits of rote memory 'his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight'.[2] 156

It can also be shown than the interests and imagination of children are tied down to concrete things and events such as food, animals, ceremonies, farm work, and so forth. It was found that the majority of their responses to story completion, free drawings and in Rorschach testing were highly impregnated with concrete realism.[3] One cannot fail to notice that both 159

[1] Nadel, from his experiments with story recounting and responses to pictures on some children of those two tribes, concluded that a people possessing a highly developed realistic art and drama, and a rich, complicated, and rationalized religious system, is characterized in the field of psychological reaction by stress on rational elements, logical cohesion, and strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach as to what is presented to them. On the other hand, a people whose culture lacks such art and drama and whose religious beliefs are centred round abstract and impersonal principles, are psychologically different in the sense that they are more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, stressing unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts and meaning and rational consistency. 'A Field Experiment in Racial Psychology', in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXVIII, 1937–8, pp. 195–211.

R. H. Thouless, experimenting on the perception of twenty Indian students and a group of British students, concludes that the former group showed a significantly greater tendency towards 'phenomenal regression' to the real object than the latter group. For instance, in the case of the Indian students there was greater tendency for circular objects inclined to the observer to be drawn as wide ellipses, for parallel-sided objects with the sides receding from the observer to be represented as parallel, and for objects of the same real size at different distances to be drawn with very little difference in size. 'A Racial Difference in Perception', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 330–9.

[2] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *The Balinese Character*, p. 84.

[3] For typical examples of story completion and Rorschach responses, see appendices.

As to free drawings, the writer has on two occasions asked pupils in the compulsory school to draw whatever they wanted to, and the following is a list of the subjects drawn: oranges, girls carrying baskets on their heads, a boy tending sheep, a car and a palm tree, a boy riding a donkey and a car behind him, a girl feeding a chicken, fish, a car with people gathered around it, palm tree and water, two boys racing on donkey back, ducks, a house, a trader selling sugar to a girl, lemons, bananas and oranges, a man cutting sugarcane, a boy climbing a palm tree, a girl beating a tambourine, a ceremonial procession near the mosque, a farewell procession for a pilgrim.

When I asked some of the children about their drawings, none of them told me of any plot in the drawing. They were purely representative of things and concrete events. The children's drawings were characterized by the almost entire absence of 'landscape' in [532]

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Mukkadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

159 124 [156] [193] [641]

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

159

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[194]

[P.240 is blank]

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APPENDIX I

159 794 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white [188] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in 159 farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription [102] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during [794] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[153] [1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the New Testament.

[183] [2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and purity.

[102] [3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee, those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. 159 [944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

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159 in the Kuttab to improve his handwriting, as the maxim of the pious ancestors runs, 'good handwriting increases the clarity of truth'.

In the whole of Ali's life religion has meant much to him in terms of personal security. His need of recognition and for prestige is certainly satisfied by his knowledge of the Sacred Book and other sources of religious information. With his sensitive and shy nature he could not have integrated his personality except through this religious foundation. Moreover, Ali's subsistence resources have been secure so far as he is still dependent on his father and mother. At the end of every lunar month his older brother, Ahmad, carries Ali's family allowance of corn to the latter's house and no serious quarrel has occurred between him and his father or brother on these grounds. The harmony of relationship between Ali and his father's family could be also attributed to the fact that Ali still lives with his wife's people, who are about five hundred yards from his father's house, while his brother Ahmad lives in the father's household. Ali's father is about sixty-five years old, and is still a robust man, who works in the field, and is considered by his family as tight-fisted.

In contrast to his brother, Ali cares much more for his clothes and appearance in general, and this is one of the reasons his father sends him to deputize for him on various occasions. Moreover, while his brother has been a member of the 'Nakshabandi' mystic sect, Ali has never joined it, as his religious experience has been satisfied through his knowledge of the Koran and literacy, while his comparatively illiterate brother finds his satisfaction in the emotional ecstasy that is invoked by the repetitive rhythm of the mystic circle (zikr). Ali probably had not joined the mystic [593] order because his brother was already a member, and normally brothers are not found together in the Order. On asking Sheikh Hussein, who is the local head of the Order about this fact, I was told: 'Brothers do not come to the Order for the fear of the evil eye. Jacob advised his seven sons never to enter from the same door or follow each other; they should enter from different doors and always spread themselves.' Structurally, this is in harmony with the cultural values of hierarchy, order, and respect relations between brothers, as physical proximity between them in sitting or eating in public is not considered polite.

MAHMOUD

Mahmoud is illiterate, suspicious, and a proud man, so I had compiled his life history by asking him questions that would not arouse any scruples in his mind. He does not know when he was born, he remembers only that he just managed to escape the days of forced military conscription during the First World War, being two or three years younger than the eligible age.[1] This means that he is about fifty years old. My relation to

[1] These days are known in the villagers' language as 'assultah al askaria', when people [902] from the village were conscripted to work on the military roads or as camp sentinels in Palestine during the First World War.

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him was that of cousin-uncle, and I used to call him Uncle Mahmoud, 159
which he used to appreciate very much.

Mahmoud is the eldest and head of a family of four brothers and a half-sister, as well as a cousin living together with them. Only one of the four brothers is a full brother of Mahmoud, the other being half-brothers, while the cousin is from the paternal side, and is also the half-brother (uterine) of the other two from their mother.

Mahmoud himself was first married to his cousin, whom he divorced after having a daughter from her. He remarried, but only one daughter has survived from his second wife, and the death of his son at the age of three was due, as he thinks, to the sorcery of his first wife. Two years after the death of his first wife, her daughter was married to Hassan, Mahmoud's cousin: there is one son. One of his brothers is married to a close relative of Mahmoud's wife, and all the brothers at present are married and work together, although recently two of them went to live in new and separate houses. Before the last two brothers married, all of them were working on their land as well as three acres they usually rent. More than ten years ago one of the brothers went off to work in Cairo as a domestic servant, and since then he has never settled in the village, but pays visits occasionally to see his wife and family.

None of the brothers is literate, except the youngest, who had been conscripted into the army and has there learned to read and write as part of the army's literacy campaign for conscripts. After completing his service he volunteered as a lorry driver in the army, where he works now, leaving his wife and a small boy under the guardianship of his brother, Mahmoud.

Returning to Mahmoud himself, he worked as a farmer until the age of thirty, then he became the head of the village police (ghafeer) and this job seems to have given much scope for his pride and energy. He would usually talk about the order he maintained in the village while he was occupying that post, and emphasize the fact that everybody respected and even feared him. He was dismissed from this post after he had struck someone in a fight, and for this offence he was imprisoned for eighteen [683] months.

During his work as head of 'ghafeers', Mahmoud related with great pride that he managed to prevent the women from going to fill their jars from the Nile on account of certain rumours which had spread in the [626] village about their behaviour along the agricultural road, and this temporary action from his side was met with general approval. It also befell him to carry out the wishes of the preacher from the city, to prevent women from following the bier of the deceased as mentioned in the chapter on [178] social change. He added that, after his time, women reverted to their old practice.

Mahmoud goes to town now and again on business, but, apart from such interruptions, he spends most of his time in the village tending to his farm. Three years ago, one of his half-brothers had a disagreement with

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159 him and left him for Cairo, whereupon Mahmoud followed him to effect a reconciliation and the brother was persuaded to return.

A year ago he helped his cousin, who is not strong enough for farming, to open a small shop. The income from the shop as well as from farming is pooled by all the family, Mahmoud being the one who looks after the needs and requirements of all his brothers and their wives.

[755] Mahmoud is a great believer in the evil eye, and it was his practice to warn the writer against certain people by asking him to recite a 'Sura' from the Koran on passing them. He told the writer that he usually spreads on parts of his farm a handful of sand from the tomb of Saint Abu-Naggi, who lies buried on high ground, to ward off the evil eye. In this connection he related the following incident: once, a person well known for his evil eye deliberately passed by Mahmoud's farm and admired it. The same man later passed by his farm and admired his cow, which after that day gave blood instead of milk. As Mahmoud could no longer tolerate the envier, he seized upon the occasion of a funeral in the clan's guest house to which the envier belonged, and went to complain about him, holding a white flag and asking his clan to stop their kinsman from casting his evil eye on his land and animals.

Mahmoud is strong and healthy and takes special pride in the fact that the malaria epidemic did not touch him. He interprets this as evidence that his social intentions and dealing are genuinely good. And because of his health during the epidemic period, he used to visit and assist the sick, and since there were very few who could attend to the burial ceremony and prayers, he made a point of not missing any if he could manage it as attendance is a pious deed and God rewards it. He is also grateful to God [731] that he and his brothers managed to save their bread from the torrent that destroyed most of the village harvest in 1948. They all waded into the water, spending a whole night and morning in gathering their floating stacks of corn and removing them to the dry land.

In assessing Mahmoud's personality and position in the village, one must point out the structurally precarious composition of Mahmoud's family, consisting of half-brothers and a cousin. Yet his personality, together with the close relationship between the brothers' wives, has assured the unity of the family. This might also be due in part to the fact that none of the brothers has a grown-up boy, a factor that might tempt the father to work independently.

Mahmoud combines a conservative and unimaginative nature with extraversion and a great deal of self-confidence. Although he has been to town on frequent visits and occupied an official post, he has not altered his dress or accent in favour of town ways. His 'zabout', the outer garment, still has the long and wide sleeves that stretch at least three inches past the hand, his turban is a large one, and he is fond of carrying his thick stave on moving about in the village.

Mahmoud is a satisfactory example of the older generation of the village,

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both in mentality as well as in appearance. His wide connections with other families, his geniality and warmth, win him a great deal of respect and prestige. He is also called upon to participate in Arab councils and the writer heard him once telling off another person by saying, 'You have never come out from your place near the house oven, while it is for me to take a part in the conversation in a big gathering'. His qualities for leadership make him the sort of person whose co-operation would be necessary for any plan of social reform. Unlike many other people in the village, his prestige is not based on ownership of a large-sized farm, or piety, but he compensates for that through his personality as well as his brothers' solidarity. 159 [559]

Mahmoud used not to say his prayers in the mosque or anywhere else for a very long time, but lately he has observed them quite regularly and thus, at last, in his own words, 'God has shown me the right way'. I was told by one of his half-brothers that Mahmoud began to be regular in saying his prayers after the successive deaths of his two grand-daughters from his sole surviving daughter. One of his main grudges in life is that he has no son, nor are there any grown-up sons in the whole of the family. It is only two years ago that his cousin had a boy whom Mahmoud pampers and carries about whenever he is free.

Mahmoud is humorously known in the village as the best eater, especially when he was younger. He told me (and I heard it from others) that he challenged some people once to eat fifteen small 'kurs' (a loaf of wheat bread six inches in diameter and half an inch in thickness) with a 'ghamoos' (vegetable), and he succeeded in doing so. He is also reputed to be skilled in slaughtering lambs and goats, and in distributing meat on ceremonial occasions.

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Appendix Eight

THE STEWART EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TEST

SAMPLES OF TEST RESPONSES

125 Tests have been recently adopted by some social anthropologists:

1. To provide quick means for collecting useful material in relatively little time.
2. To draw the attention of the field worker to data which otherwise might escape notice.
3. To be used as an objective check on one's own impressions, especially in the field of culture-personality relationship.
4. To provide means of quantitative analysis.

Tests, however, must be interpreted in their cultural context. Leighton and Kluckhohn assert that tests hold considerable promise in anthropological research, but owing to their present state of imperfection, must be used in conjunction with material obtained by the usual anthropological techniques of observation and interview.[1]

1. The Stewart Emotional Response Test

159 125 This test is a series of questions asking for experiences associated with five emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and shame, one question asking for the best thing that could happen to the child, and another asking for the worst that could happen.[2] After administering the test on twelve children, the responses of the following five children were chosen on the grounds of being the most complete performance. Three boys disclaimed their experience of such emotions, while others gave confused answers.

No girls' responses are recorded here. I found them most frustrating in [156] this respect, except in the Rorschach ink-blots. Young girls were 'giggly'; older ones were shy and uneasy. Their way out was 'I don't know; I am not a man'. They probably refused to co-operate because the tests were first administered on the boys from whom they heard about them. After

[1] D. Leighton and C. Kluckhohn, *Children of the People*, p. 227.
[2] Ibid., p. 247.

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trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless. [159] [125]

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.) [262]
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them.

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'. [369]

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5. I shall be angry if I have to leave the Kuttab.
6. I am afraid of the Ghost (Sul) and the shadows at night. I am also afraid of the scorpion and the snake.

B. *A boy of nine years:*

1. I became sad when the cow I was taking to the canal to drink, trod down the field and spoilt some of the plants; then my father came and brought it out from the plants.
2. When the ball I am playing with lands on top of the roof of a house which is not our house. Then I become afraid of climbing the walls to retrieve it.
3. I become afraid when I beat another boy and he goes to tell my father.
4. I felt angry when an older boy struck me, so I told my father to beat him.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*

1. When his father does not give him money to spend on sweets on market day he becomes sad and goes to his mother.
2. When his father sees him playing with other boys whilst he should be working, he threatens and frightens him.
3. He becomes angry when his father quarrels with his mother, spilling food and throwing it away.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*

1. He was sad when he went to the field, and on his return home discovered that he brought clover for the sheep, but forgot to bring vegetables for his mother.
2. He is sad when he is beaten without reason.
3. He gets angry when someone curses his father. It is only the illegitimate child who can hear his father being cursed and does nothing about it. To curse one's father is as blasphemous as cursing one's religion.
4. He would feel ashamed if he went about in rags.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*

1. I am afraid of Our God (Rabbana), and of father, and of those who are older than I am.
2. I am afraid of the cold, of hunger, and of not being properly clothed (lit. naked—'Iryan).
3. I am angry when I forget to say my prayers.
4. I would be ashamed if I had not had my hair cut.
5. I would be ashamed when my sister grew up and her breasts became conspicuous and she was still not married. Other boys would shame me by drawing my attention to my unwanted sister (lit. barren—bayri).[1]

When asked 'What is the best thing that could happen to you?' the previous boys gave the following answers:

[1] The same word applies to the uncultivated land.

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A. *A boy of seven years:*
To be able to play ball with other boys, without the interference of my younger brother.[1]

B. *A boy of nine years:*
When I find money dropped on the ground, or left around after the market.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
When I have a good meal with lots of meat.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
What do I want more than sufficient 'food and drink'?[2]

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
To be rich and endowed with 'baraka', and so be able to help the poor and feed the hungry.

When asked 'What is the worst thing that could happen to you?' the same boys gave these instances:

A. To be stung by a scorpion.
B. To be thrashed by my father.
C. That someone younger than I slaps me on the face and I am unable to retaliate.
D. To die in a fire or drown at sea.
E. To see my mother ill. To work as hired labourer on another person's land (not his father's).

[1] This boy gave almost this response twice, an acute symptom of sibling rivalry.
[2] This is an idiomatic Arabic phrase: the word drink cannot, of course, have the English connotation of intoxicant.

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Appendix Nine

MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

BAVELAS MORAL IDEOLOGY TEST

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THIS test is designed to ascertain the public official moral ideas of the group. The child is asked for three things that would be considered good for him or for a boy of his age to do; and for the same number of things that would be considered bad to do. The individual responses are taken to indicate not just how the child acts in a given situation, but how he thinks people in general want him to act.[1]

The first part of the test was elicited in this way: 'What could you or a boy of your age do that would be a good thing for which father, the family or the people would praise you? Mention three things.'[2]

A. *Age Nine:*
1. Go on errands for my parents, buying tea and sugar for mother and cigarettes for father.
2. Memorize my assignment of the Koran.
3. I don't know anything else.

B. *Age ten:*
1. To take the cow to the farm and feed it.
2. What else? There is nothing more pleasing to father than this.
3. To lead the blind on the way.

C. *Age thirteen:*
1. To go straight without making trouble with other boys.
2. To fetch water home.
3. Attend to the animals in the field and at home.

D. *Age thirteen:*
1. To attend to his work.
2. Not to beat younger children.
3. To keep quiet and not play, as such conduct pleases his father.

[1] Alex Bavelas, 'A Method for Investigating Individual and Group Ideology', in *Sociometry*, Vol. V, 1942.
[2] The five boys tested here are not the same boys tested previously.

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E. *Age sixteen:*
1. To fetch fertilizer from the hills.
2. To be a 'pious boy' and obey his parents.
3. To save a swimmer who is in danger of being drowned.

Each of the same boys were asked: 'What could you or a boy of your age do that would be a bad thing, that makes father, family or other people think badly of you? Mention these things.'

A. *Age nine:*
1. To hit my younger brother.
2. Not to share food with him on being asked by my mother.
3. To be greedy in eating.

B. *Age ten:*
1. To neglect his work and play.
2. To break things.
3. To drop and lose money on being sent to buy something from the shop.

C. *Age thirteen:*
1. Not to feed the animals.
2. Not to fetch water.
3. To curse one's religion.

D. *Age thirteen:*
1. To swear at one's parents.
2. To play, for play makes one forget the Koran that one has memorized.
3. I don't know.

E. *Age sixteen:*
1. Not to be a good Moslem by not saying his prayers, and if having much money not helping the poor.
2. To be envious of other people.
3. To smoke and to tell lies.

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Appendix Ten

STORY COMPLETION TEST

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THE story completion test, composed of nine stories, is based on the pattern of stories devised by Pintner for the assessment of various aspects of the child's personality, e.g. attitude towards authority, moral tendencies, interests, wishful thinking, fears and anxieties.[1] Such aspects of the personality are not only important from the psychological, but also from the sociological viewpoint. The writer considers the use of such tests as relevant material for this study. Some of Pintner's stories were adapted, two were omitted, and story 5 was added. The test was administered in the following way. Every boy was told, 'I am going to start a story, and I want you to complete it in whatever way you like'. The boys were encouraged and occasional prompting was necessary on some points.

The following are the stories:

1. Once there was a boy sitting outside the house. He was not playing with other boys, but was staying all alone by himself. . . . (Why?)[2]
2. One day the parents of this boy got angry with him. . . . (What was it about? What happened? How did it end?)
3. The boy went to fetch water from the Nile on donkey-back. But on the way the water-jars were broken. . . . (What happened afterwards? Who punished him?)
4. In the street the boy was fighting with another boy. A man passed. . . . (What happened then?)
5. The boy saw his younger brother playing with a ball. . . . (What did he do?)
6. This boy had a friend he liked very much. One day he said to him: 'You come with me, and I'll show you something, but you mustn't tell anyone because it's a secret.' . . . (What did he show him? What did they do?)

[1] R. Pintner, 'Four Retests of a Personality Inventory', in *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. XXIX, 1938. These tests were pointed out to the writer by Dr. Ramzy of the Institute of Education, Cairo, who used them in his thesis 'An Experiment in Assessing Personality', London, 1948 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

[2] The bracketed questions are examples of the promptings.

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7. It was night. The boy was sleeping, and suddenly he woke up screaming. . . . (What made him wake up? What was the matter?) 159
8. One night the boy dreamt he saw the angels during his sleep. They asked him to pray for something he wanted. . . . (What did he pray for?)
9. This boy is growing up. He likes to be a man. . . . (What would he like to do?)

The story completion test was given to seven boys and five of them gave the following satisfactory completions: [125]

A. *Age nine:*

1. He does not play with the other boys because they are older than he is, and he is waiting for a boy of his age to match him in the game.
2. His parents were angry because he returned late after being sent on an errand, and rebuked him for talking to other children on the way.
3. When he breaks the water-jars his mother beats him and deprives him of food.
4. The man beats the two boys who were quarrelling, tells their fathers about this, the fathers will beat their sons.
5. He would not let his younger brother play with the ball, and immediately he sees him playing, he would send him on an errand.
6. I don't know what he said to the other boy.
7. He cried, 'Oh! Father.' He imagined a wolf or a ghost or thieves breaking into the house. He feared the dark and said, 'In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'.
8. He prayed for a good garment and a fez.
9. I don't know.

B. *Age nine:*

1. The boy does not play with the other boys because they usually strike him; they do not speak to him, nor does he speak to them or sit near them. But later on he finds another boy with whom he is on good terms and plays with him.
2. The parents got angry with the son, and hence did not feed him. This was because the boy did not obey his parents' commands, and such disobedience would bring God's anger. The boy had to go to some relatives to get food, but when his parents did not find any boy to run an errand for them, they brought him back to the house, and fed him, and thus they were reconciled.
3. When the boy broke the water-jars he went weeping to his mother, who asked him how this happened. The mother became angry and struck him for his negligence.
4. When the man saw those boys quarrelling, he separated them,

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159 and asked them to go away. But when the man was out of sight, the two boys returned to resume their fight. When one of them started to cry, the other fled, for if he waited, the father of the former boy would have caught him and struck him.

5. When the older boy found the ball with his brother, he snatched it from him; the younger boy started to cry. When the mother asked the older boy to give it back to his brother, he did. But when the mother went out, the older boy took the ball again and ran outside the house with it, looking proud and happy. The other boys asked him to show it to them and play together with it. When he returned home his mother spat in his face for taking the ball from his brother. He said that he did not take it, but it was given to him by his brother, who did not want it any more. Then the mother told him that he was a liar and asked him to hand the ball back to his brother.
6. When the two boys talked secretly, one of them warned the other against their enemy. They decided not to talk or sit with him or show him anything they had.
7. He screamed, saying that he felt some people trampling over him, and on asking them who they were, they refused to answer him. Then he shouted to be rescued: 'Oh, the One (Yawahid)' (a way of imploring God when in a state of distress, or when frightened, especially used in the village to summon other people for help, who on hearing such a cry, would immediately go to see what had happened).
8. He prayed for gold, clothes, shoes and socks.
9. He wants to grow up to farm and grow corn and go to Cairo. He also wants to get married. He does not want to become an old man with a bent back who is going to die.

C. *Age fourteen:*

1. The boy is angry because the other boys do not play with him.
2. He cursed his father and mother and thus made them angry. They thrashed him, and when he cried they sent him outside the house 'for the dogs to eat him'.
3. When the boy broke the jars, he was never sent again to fetch water, and his sister had to do it instead.
4. He interfered between the two boys, gave each a slap on the face and cursed their fathers.
5. The older boy took the ball from his younger brother to play with it himself. The father came and thrashed the older boy and rebuked him for being jealous of his younger brother.
6. He showed the other boy a place where gold was hidden. After collecting the gold, they sold it and with the money bought clothes, cars and bicycles.
7. He was afraid that they might be thieves who would beat him,

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and the people gathered to his rescue after he shouted 'Oh, the One'.

8. He prayed to God to make him find a hidden treasure.
9. He wants to grow up to take over his father's work in the farm, while his father remains in the village.

D. *Age fifteen:*

1. The boy must have been beaten by somebody; or the boys who are playing must be stronger than he, and might have torn his clothes.
2. After his parents were angry with him, he had to leave the village, looking for livelihood somewhere else. After some time he got homesick, as he remembered his family and people, so he started to send money and letters to his parents trying to make up for his desertion. When he returned to the village, the parents were happy as their son had 'redeemed' himself. The grandparents and the maternal aunts helped to bring about this reconciliation.
3. His mother asked him how the jars were broken. She thought that her boy was affected by 'the evil eye' of other women. So she asked him to step over the fire in which she had sprinkled salt which was cracking. If his father heard about his breaking of the jars he would have beaten him; mothers are affectionate.
4. If the man had passed by without separating or quietening the fighting boys, he would have been blamed for that.
5. He plays with his younger brother and appeases him with the ball, so his mother might be able to get on with her cooking.
6. He took the other boy away to a secret place to tell him about his enemy who wants to kill him.
7. A thief must have attacked the boy, so that he cried out to wake up his family to rescue him. He may be crying with pain (sick).
8. He wants to find gold and become rich and to be able to wear fine clothes.
9. He wants to grow up and become a pious man, get married and perform his pilgrimage.

E. *Age sixteen:*

1. He did not play with the other boys because he was a 'polite' boy and did not wish to cause any trouble to his people.
2. The boy quarrelled with the other boys and his parents became angry with him. He fled to another place to find work. His parents were worried about his flight, and sent telegrams to 'the government'. Later on he returned to the village and his parents accepted him (lit. collected him) for fear of shame.
3. When the water-jars were broken the boy went home crying and his mother consoled him by saying, 'It does not matter, this is a "sacrifice" (fida) for you. It's a "baraka" that the evil eye hit the jars and not you. Your neck could have been broken.'

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● 1594. The man cuffed the two boys and gave them a lesson on how to be polite. He told them if someone cursed you or your father it is better to say 'May God forgive you', because the curse is actually inflicted on the person who curses, so it is better for him not to hit back, otherwise the curse will return on him.

5. He took the ball from his younger brother, and asked him to go to the Kuttab.
6. He must have told the other boy about money the former stole from his mother. The other boys on hearing this, said, 'With this money buy us something sweet to eat'.
7. The boy was frightened because he was 'seized' by a saint, vows to whom his parents had not fulfilled.
8. The boy prayed to enter paradise, be freed from disease and have no enemies.
9. He wants to grow up and memorize the Koran.

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Appendix Eleven

A NOTE ON SOME DREAMS COLLECTED IN THE VILLAGE

DREAMS are considered to be of value as a means of obtaining useful ethnological material, and thus could serve purposes similar to those of tests. The significance of dreams is hence relevant data for our study. It must be pointed out here that the writer was not fully aware of the importance of such data while he was in the field, and for this reason he did not collect enough dreams, and the ones recorded here are all those collected, without any selection.

In Silwa, women are reputed to be more capable of dreaming than men; they are also known to be better interpreters. Boys and girls do not communicate their dreams either to their parents or to other boys and girls. It was a great surprise for them to be asked to recollect dreams, and much effort was required by them to recall them.

It is believed that dreams are inspired by angels, or at least they are caused by some vaguely defined supernatural forces. The importance of dreams, especially as a means of forecasting future happenings, receives its religious justification from the story of the Prophet Joseph related in the Koran showing his infallible insight in interpreting dreams. At least, among men in the village, it is believed that the dreams of a person who sleeps ritually clean are truer than those of one who is not in the same state.

As in Tikopia, the weight attached to a dream varies according to the intensity of the personal situation at the time; a dream receives more credence in so far as it can be related to some question immediately at issue.[1] When a person is in a critical situation, e.g. financial difficulty, absence of a son, expecting decision in a law suit, or in the case of a pregnant woman, he or she does not only pay considerable attention to dreams, but asks relatives and friends to dream for him or her. On their part, such relatives and friends volunteer to tell such a person about dreams in which he or she may appear.

There is a certain formal technique of interpreting dreams, especially amongst women, which the writer did not investigate. The narration of

[1] Raymond Firth, 'The Meaning of Dreams in Tikopia', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934, p. 63.

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 The narration of

159 dreams usually starts by saying, 'I dreamt, May God render it good and blissful' (Allahum ijalu khair wazain), the listener usually answers, 'Good, if God wills' (khair insha Allah).

It is worth noting here that most of the dreams recorded reflect in their manifest content many features of the waking life in the village. As for their latent content, it is left to the psychologist to see in it the working of the unconscious.[1] The writer is aware of the lack of associations related to the 'working situation' of these dreams to render their psychological interpretation adequate.[2]

In some of these dreams, however, one cannot fail to recognize representations of imaginary fulfilment of ungratified wishes, sexual and otherwise, e.g. performing pilgrimage, eating meat, receiving money.

In children's dreams especially, one is struck by the strong indications and symbols, without much secondary elaboration or distortion, of anxiety, fear, and ambivalence. Anxiety and repressed fear of authority are reflected in symbols such as that of the child's fear of his head being cut off by the barber (a dream of the castration anxiety type); rolling down the sloping ground and dying (No. 2; if ground symbolizes mother this dream reflects uncertainty about mother's affection and hence an ungratified wish); being stung by a scorpion, which may be taken as a symbol of father and authority, but the boy was not dead; he was on a bed in a dark room, which represents the mother (wish for regression, No. 8). Ambivalence is obvious in dream No. 1, where an unconscious fear of the father (barber) is combined with another wish to please the father by fetching water; and also in dream 5, where ambivalence is reflected in indications of sibling rivalry for the father's love.

Such repressed desires and resentments reflect some of the unconscious pressures in the process of growing up, and to some of which allusions were made previously.

BOYS' DREAMS

Age eight:

One day I was going towards the fields when I found the son of the village barber cutting off the heads of some people with his razor. He approached me while I was on donkey-back and told me that he wanted to cut off my head too. I entreated him not to, for I was going to fetch water for my people, whereupon he let me go.

Age nine:

I was once sleeping on a mat on sloping ground. Suddenly I began to roll down, and died.

[1] 'No wish . . . is able to produce a dream unless it is either unconscious or else associated with an allied unconscious one.' Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1938, p. 263.

[2] Géza Roheim (ed.), 'Dream Analysis and Field-work in Anthropology', in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, New York, 1947, pp. 37–136.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX XI

Age fourteen:

I was once in the fields when suddenly a group of people drew near to me. I started to run and they pursued me, but I escaped. 159

Age ten:

I dreamt we had many chickens and ducks. One day my mother went to feed and water them, but she found that they were all dead. This was by 'God's will', for they were not eaten by a wolf or anything else.

Age twelve:

I dreamt that I was catching fish in the pond near the railway station. When I had caught a fish I went to show it to my father. Beside me there were two other boys fishing. When I caught a big fish and I wanted to show it to my father, the two boys snatched it and ran away.

Age ten:

I dreamt that I was looking for stray money after market day. Every time I searched I found a coin which I put in a tin with a lid. At last I filled the tin with money which became my property.

Age fifteen:

There were black monkeys swimming in the canal and people were trying to catch them. But every time they attempted it, the monkeys dived into the water. At last they managed to get hold of them, took them out of the water and tied them to a tree. Later, they released the monkeys and made them fetch grass and clover from the field for the cows.

Age twelve:

I dreamt that I was stung by a scorpion. Then I was put on a bed with a mat on it in a dark room. People thought I had died and set up a wailing for me, but I was not dead.

Age fifteen:

I dreamt that my father returned from Cairo with another man. He brought me three pairs of shoes, four gallabiahs, a turban and a cap. My father himself was wearing a new pair of shoes and a new turban. And I also dreamt that when I got up in the morning I could not find my father.

GIRLS' DREAMS

Age eleven:

Once I dreamt that I fell into a pond, through my foot slipping. With me, at the time, were other girls who did not help me, but I managed to get out by myself.

Age twelve:

Once I was attacked by a monster with bulging eyes, protruding teeth and jet black skin. While it was getting ready to strike me, I began to weep.

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APPENDIX XI

Age thirteen:

●159 I dreamt once that I saw the Prophet under a green dome. Then I called upon my sisters to come and shake hands with the Prophet saying, 'He is like my father, but better than him(?)'

Age ten:

Once I was crossing a very large bridge, and suddenly it collapsed and I was drowning in the canal. I cried, 'O father, O people, come and rescue me'.

Age twelve:

Once I dreamt that I found a pigeon which took me on pilgrimage. Whilst I was in Mecca I found a treasure. Then I returned home on the pigeon's back. Later on I took my grandmother, maternal aunt and my sister to visit Hijaz (Holy Places). We spent the treasure on building a big palace. Then suddenly a lion appeared; I was so frightened that I woke up.

Age ten:

One day I was sitting in the street looking at a book. Then came 'azzabbal' (trader who collects chicken droppings in exchange for female wares, e.g. needles, thread, salt, spices), and reminded me of the book I had promised to give him, but I told him that I could not give him any book, for fear of the teacher. Then 'azzabbal' took me on to the top of a wall and threw me into the river. I remained swimming around for a long time without knowing where to go, till I woke up.

MEN'S DREAMS

Age about twenty-eight, my informant Ali:

I dreamt that my father and mother-in-law had been preparing themselves to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. I asked my wife, then, to prepare food for me to join them on their journey, and the three of us went to the shrines of the Holy Places.

Age twenty-eight, Ali:

I dreamt that I was attacked by a bull with big horns. He trampled on me but I managed to escape for a while. The bull persisted in pursuing me. At last I held him by the horns which he kept on shaking in attempting to free himself, but I jumped on his back. It ran towards the Nile, and as he dived into the water, I jumped off on to land and escaped.

Age twenty-five:

One day I found a stray camel running loose into our farm. I went towards the camel to drive it away from the field. But all of a sudden I saw a naked man who said that he was the owner of the camel, and warned me against doing any harm to his animal. Then I grabbed the man by the neck and we began hitting each other. After he suffered from

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my beating he fled. (This young man told me that he found this dream difficult to interpret, so he related it to a person who is known to be good in interpreting dreams. The latter told him that the camel was his 'karina'; and everybody has a 'karina' that follows him in his life and causes him a lot of trouble and needs to be propitiated.) 159 [987]

Age twenty-two, just married and had a newly-born girl:[1]

I dreamt that my wife was pregnant, and she brought forth a boy. When I consulted my father about naming him, he insisted on calling him by the name 'Mostafa'[2] but I wanted to give him another name, and there was disagreement between my father and me. (The man connected this dream with the fact that later on his wife brought forth a girl whom he called Zainab, and that his father fell ill.) [987]

Age forty-five:

I dreamt that I was transformed into a 'green sparrow', and that on the Night of Kadr (the night of the 27th of Ramadan)[3] I entered Paradise where I stayed for seven years. Overwhelmed by the vastness of Paradise I enquired whether there was an end to it, and I was told that it had no end, and that there was neither sun nor moon; there one suffers neither heat nor cold; people sleep on couches; there are palaces the like of which have never been built on earth, fruits that have never been grown on this planet. While I was told all this, two people were holding me, one by the right arm, and the other by the left. But all of a sudden, a man came from behind me and pushed me out of Paradise saying, 'You don't deserve it yet'. (He commented that after this God helped him to perform his pilgrimage.) [987]

Age forty approximately:

Once I dreamt that Ahmad (the wealthiest village shopkeeper) was climbing a palm tree, and suddenly fell to the ground. People gathered round him and tried to revive him with 'the smell of onions and garlic'. When he recovered he said, 'I have fallen from above. But I am safe, thanks to God.'

WOMEN'S DREAMS

Age forty-five:

One day I went to the well adjacent to our clan's guest house, and found at the entrance of the guest house the man who draws the water from the well. Inside the guest house there were plants growing, such as clover and sugar cane. The man asked me to enter the guest house 'to see my father's farm'(?) When I entered I found that the northern section of the guest

[1] This dream was just before his wife gave birth to the baby.

[2] This is also the baby's grandfather's name.

[3] According to Moslem belief, the Prophet invisibly during this night made a journey from Mecca to Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. It is believed by the villagers that there is a certain unknown hour on this night, during which prayers are always answered.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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•159 house was dark with two empty water jars, while the southern side was lit and with two full water jars. I asked the man the reason for this. He told me that I was not permitted to ask such questions, but merely to look around. Then I asked him to give me some clover for my sheep as this was my father's land. He said that he could not give me anything as he was only a guardian. Then he took my water jar which I had filled and placed it in the guest house, saying, 'This water jar should not enter your house'.

Age seventy-five:

I dreamt that my father was sitting talking with 'Hag abu-Ghannam' (a pious man). The pious man's face looked dark (lit. smoky) while my father's face was bright and shining. Then the pious man asked me whether I was capable of going to see my relatives, who lived in another village, but my father said, 'No, she is not strong enough for that'.

Age thirty-five:

I dreamt that I was riding a donkey which on hearing the sound of a train threw me into the canal. In the water I found some grass tuft to which I clung. Then I discovered an iron rail leading to the bank on which I walked and so got out safely.

Age thirty-eight:

I dreamt that last year I went on pilgrimage, and saw the Prophet's tomb which has four doors, one in the east, one in the west, one in the north and one in the south. I entered the tomb from the west door while other people were looking through a window. On the north side of the Prophet's tomb there was a minaret. (The woman commented that when she told one of the pilgrims about this dream he confirmed these details, [178] and this meant that one day God would enable her to perform this religious obligation.)

Age thirty:

I was eating meat with another woman. While we were eating another girl came whom I did not know, and we gave her a portion of the meat, while we went on eating the rest. (The woman commented that meat in [178] the dream is a sign that something good may turn up unexpectedly.)

Age about forty:

One day a man came and presented me with a load of chaff and I was very pleased. (She commented that when she told her mother about it, the latter said that it might mean they would receive some money to buy [178] their ration of sugar and some clothes. After three days her husband, who works in Alexandria, sent her two pounds.)

Age thirty:

A woman neighbour was playing on the tambourine and singing with other women celebrating her son's circumcision ceremony. I filled my jar

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with water to give to her as a help for the ceremony. While I was pouring my jar into the water pot of her house, the women who were there started singing for me. I was frightened. (She commented that the 'tambourine' is an evil omen in the dream and indicates that something bad may happen.) 159 [787]

Age forty:

During the wedding ceremony of our neighbour a man gave me two coins, one for myself and the other for another woman (X). X was greedy and wanted to take the two coins. (She commented that the dream was realized, as next morning X's daughter brought forth a boy, and on the evening of the same day, she gave birth to a son.) [787]

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Appendix Thirteen

REMARKS ON THE RORSCHACH TESTING

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[125]

THE Rorschach ink-blots test was administered to male adults, and to some of the school boys and girls, twenty subjects from each group. The test was administered at the writer's home, always after a friendly chat with the subject. With the first few tests on the school children, it was found that the children attempted to give responses in 'classical Arabic', but this difficulty was soon got over when the children were told that the task had nothing to do with the school. The original idea was to give these records to a Rorschach expert in Egypt, but unfortunately he was prevented by illness from undertaking the task of interpretation. Consequently, the writer took a three-term course on the technique at the Tavistock Clinic, Institute of Human Relations. Thus any failure to give a full account of the results of testing can be attributed to his lack of sufficient experience. The method of scoring and interpretation is mainly based on that of Rorschach himself and also that of Mons.[1]

The interpretation of children's records is not attempted here, but the interpretive significance of the adults' records is given.

The first striking fact about the records is that none of the twenty subjects rejected any of the cards during their performance. The average number of responses totalled twenty-five (the average responses for a sufficiently productive person according to the experience of Rorschach experts is twenty to thirty). Thus from the quantity of their responses one is inclined to infer that the members of this group show on the whole a capacity for productivity and persistence. They try to do their best in performing a task, and do not give up easily.

The proportion between 'whole responses—W' and 'detail responses—D and d' is 14 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. This suggests a tendency to view situations in a practical and concrete manner. In other words the members of the group in their intellectual approach are more concerned with realistic situations than with abstract concepts. Moreover, their pronounced interest in minor details (d and Dd) suggests a tendency

[1] B. Klopfer and D. Kelley, *The Rorschach Technique*. W. Mons, *Principles and Practice of the Rorschach Personality Test*, London, 1950.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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•159 towards fussiness. Many of the subjects repeated the same responses in different cards or in the same card. From this one may venture to conclude that they are rather obsessional in their habits and tend to tackle their problems at random. Furthermore the proportion of wholes to human movement (W : M) being 4 : 1 suggests that their mental output is mostly reproductions of other people's ideas accepted without critical thinking.

The very high percentage of 'pure form F' responses, amounting to 82 per cent, leaves one without doubt, according to Rorschach principles, that these people are very rigid in their outlook and approach towards life (the reasonable intellectual control is represented by 50 per cent F responses).

This rigid intellectual control and desire for conformity is also confirmed from the records by very low frequency of human movement responses (M). The percentage of M responses is 4·5; and out of twenty persons fourteen persons gave no M response at all. The quality of the few M's given is not vigorous or lively on the whole. All this suggests that these villagers have great resistance against revealing their fantasy life which is kept under control by their caution and their preference for a more conventional and restricted mode of expression (F%). Their fantasies are to a great degree inhibited and they make little use of their creative imagination.

With regard to colour (C), only four did not give any colour responses. When the proportion of M to C is examined (1 : 3·5) one can state that these people are on the whole extratensive, and more readily responsive in their emotional reactions to the external world. Their emotional life tends to find its main outlet more in outer reactions, conventional procedures rather than in mature fantasy or introspection. In ten cases there is a balanced outer maturity, judging by the almost equal number of FC and CF, while in the remaining records there is a definite tendency towards impulsiveness and lack of maturity, shown by preponderance of CF over FC.

These are some of the striking observations on the interpretive significance of the Rorschach records of this group, showing some of the basic traits of the personality structure in this group.[1] The small sample, however, would not allow for unreserved generalization. Moreover, the individual differences are quite apparent from the different responses in the group. The following are samples of the Rorschach responses:

[1] The interpretation of these records is by no means complete; it lacks for instance analysis of content and quality of organization. I have tried, however, to follow Rorschach experiments in the study of culture-personality approach. See E. Oberholzer, 'Rorschach's Experiment and the Alorese', in *The People of Alor*, by Cora du Bois, Chapter XXII. Theodora M. Abel and Renata A. Calabresi, Chapter XIII in *Life in a Mexican Village*, by O. Lewis. Leighton and Kluckhohn, *The Children of the People*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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SAMPLES OF MEN'S RECORDS

Mahmoud—informant.

Card No.	*Performance*[1]
I	dog
	woman
2 minutes	cow
	man
	buffalo
	boy
	young girl
II	big woman
	virgin girl
4 minutes	calf
	dog with open mouth
	ram
III	cock
	monkey
4 minutes	fish
	fish
	man
	another man
	mouse
	rabbit
	duck
	cock
IV	elephant
	bird
4 minutes	lion
	dog
	train smoke-stack
V	woman
	tongues
3 minutes	two people arguing
	crocodile
	man
	crocodile with wide mouth
VI	bird
	constable
2 minutes	old man
	bull
	cow

[1] Enquiry omitted.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Card No.	*Performance*
VII	camel
	woman
3 minutes	rabbit
	ewe
VIII	flag
	ewe
5 minutes	ewe
	man
	man holding the ewe by its leg
IX	man wearing his turban
	man riding his horse
3 minutes	donkey
	ewe
X	poisonous snake
	woman
5 minutes	another snake with its mouth open and tail curled
	scorpion
	mouse
	rabbit
	table with a bottle on it
	scorpion
	a sleeping woman

Ali—informant (30 years).

I 1 minute	middle part looks like 'sea scorpion', outer parts wings
II 3 minutes	the red parts look like two mice, dark parts like wolves or crows, lower red part butterflies
III 3 minutes	a human skeleton, with a stomach attached to it, the red part like two lungs—opening of anus with faeces emerging
IV 2 minutes	an animal which I don't know, and has two eyes and two horns, the whole thing may be some sort of decoration
V 1 minute	a bat, with two ears, two legs and two wings
VI 30 seconds	something decorated

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Card No.	*Performance*
VII 1 minute	two people facing each other, putting a hand behind back, and lifting the other
VIII 1 minute	monkeys on a hill, or perhaps a tent with a pole in the middle
IX 1 minute	two animals, with a pole in the middle
X 7 minutes	two people falling on their heads from the top pole lion rabbit's head like the inner parts of the body, throat and lungs yellow flower bud

Man—fifty years old.

I 2 minutes	a bat vine leaves a black insect frog
II 1½ minutes	rabbit pencil the leg of a pigeon
III 1 minute	a picture of a man human heart gall bladder hands
IV 1 minute	looks like a huge rock with pipes hanging down human legs
V 1 minute	mouse sparrow's feet sparrow's wings
VI 1½ minutes	statue pole on which statue stands bird's claws
VII 1½ minutes	bird camel tree leaves or stones

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Card No.	*Performance*
VIII	a picture of a monkey
	tree from which monkeys are hanging
1 minute	roots of the trees
IX	perforated tree leaves
1 minute	red tomatoes
X	smoke-stack
	an entrance door
5 minutes	picture of a bird
	scorpion
	frame of a picture
	(this is the strangest card)

SAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Card No.	*Performance*
Boy—10½ years old.	
I	two men clapping with their hands
	two mountains
1 minute	mosque
	dome
II	plants
	roses (red)
4 minutes	pigeon
	head of a cock
III	two cocks
	foot of a man
3 minutes	cock
	frog
IV	man
30 seconds	
V	kite flying
30 seconds	
VI	camel
30 seconds	
VII	

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Card No.	*Performance*
VIII	dome
	cat
1 minute	water jar
IX	tree
1 minute	vine leaf (green)
X	mouse
1 minute	woman

Boy—fourteen years old

I	Jinn (ghost—black) with its two eyes, mouth, horns and
2 minutes	feet
II	mosque
	blood (red)
2 minutes	dogs with ears
	open space
	ears
	mouth of a dog
III	like ghosts
	blood (red)
2 minutes	necks of ghosts
	their feet
IV	mountain and clouds over it (black)
1 minute	stones
V	wasp (black with feathers)
1½ minutes	these are its wings and legs.
VI	statue
1 minute	black garment
VII	devils with horns. These are its tails, and they are sitting
1½ minutes	in a dark place
VIII	dome
	lion
1 minute	red soil
IX	fire (red and yellow)
1 minute	firewood

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Card No.	Performance
● 159 X	like a garden
	lion
3 minutes	deer
	face of a donkey
	fallen plants (scattered green)
	wood
	camels

Girl—ten years old.

I	camel
	kite
1½ minutes	crow
II	two monkeys, these are their legs and they are putting their
1 minute	hands on each other
III	a man, another man
	rose
1½ minutes	hands of the men, their feet
IV	wasp, these are its wings
30 minutes	
V	wasp, these are its feet and this is its mouth
1 minute	
VI	mosque, these are its walls, its stairs and its dome
1 minute	
VII	hill, stones
30 seconds	
VIII	mice
	hell (red)
1 minute	Paradise (green)
IX	monkeys, sitting on stones and hitting each other
30 seconds	
X	a man riding a donkey
	deer
2 minutes	pigeon
	cock, hen, rabbit, cock, hen

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Card No.	*Performance*
Girl—twelve years old.	
I	a tree with some people sitting on the top of it
	stones
3 minutes	bird
	duck
II	men putting their hands on each other, and wearing caps
3 minutes	on their heads, facing each other
III	monkeys with a red nose, the monkeys are sitting with their
	hands and legs cut off
3 minutes	a man putting his hand on his waist
IV	a lion sitting with a small head
1 minute	
V	a wasp on the ground with its wings and ears
2 minutes	
VI	a corn mill, people pouring seeds into the mill
1 minute	
VII	small fish in the water
30 seconds	
VIII	a cat on the tree and eating from it
30 seconds	
IX	people praying in the mosque
30 seconds	
X	water wheel with its pole
	donkey
3 minutes	owl
	butterfly

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers 101
of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, 161
represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, 101
or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has 175
lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, 175
their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. 178
From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of [636]
the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, 181
but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

F 162 241 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 175 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus (10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

E F 161 311 In point of fact, once order and public security were re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E 161 162 The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000 inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([13]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([13]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([14]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken: on the one hand the *industrialisation of the* country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel-
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

5. T.—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrîzi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 133 [134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince *Omar Toussoun*, in his *Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours*, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 52–3.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of school-children during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'id, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

F 162 241 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 175 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus (10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

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Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (11). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (12). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (13). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawîr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*bardri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
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It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, the problem of over-population will become acute. The palliatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken: on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawlwil*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amir*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is /183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- /185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe /183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, /185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").
As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the /166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside /162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary /166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other /184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

F 184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened—a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E F 162 166 In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E 186 166 A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves that they hope to return. They find work most often as building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess*; they are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 a day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and always in danger of unemployment.

E 166 464 511 557 After a few years' experience some come back to their native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers, fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

5. T.—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. 113 [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrîzi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). 133 [134] 103

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

113 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant."
● 162 THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan.
[423]

[453 426] 15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand. E F 113

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages. F [584]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14. F [162 872]

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.) E F [796 527]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
" 5–9 "	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
" 10–19 "	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
" 20–29 "	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
" 30–39 "	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
" 40–49 "	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
" 50–59 "	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
" 60–69 "	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
" 70–79 "	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
" 80–89 "	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
" 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

840 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (¹¹). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (¹²). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133 241]

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (¹³). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 77 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 687 648

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

There is another aspect of the high mortality rate of children, which is not confined to the Silwa community, but applies to the rest of the country. Infant mortality has an obvious effect on the stability of marriage relationship, as a woman that bears children who do not survive is in danger of being divorced by her husband, for she is considered the same as one who cannot bear children at all. The larger the number of children surviving, the less likelihood there is of divorce.[1] Hence, the dire need to prevent such a disaster by women who resort to many devices for pregnancy or warding off the evil eye, some of which were described earlier. Official statistics clearly show the relation between divorce and the number of children born or surviving; the latter case is shown in the following table.

TABLE III

The relation between divorce and the number of surviving children in percentages[2]

No. of Children	*Divorces*				
	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
None	74·7	76·0	77·0	76·8	77·8
One child	16·3	15·78	15·3	15·3	15·0
Two children	5·08	4·78	4·52	4·54	4·2
Three "	2·18	2·10	1·95	1·90	1·77
Four "	0·985	0·907	0·754	0·712	0·778
Five "	0·398	0·395	0·316	0·348	0·332
More than five children	0·318	0·222	0·245	0·186	0·205

This high mortality rate for this age group is partly due to the onset of various child diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, diphtheria, as well as endemic diseases such as dysentery. As mentioned earlier, the sickness of children at this stage is acknowledged by the villagers themselves and sometimes attributed to acute states of jealousy from siblings, or to the exposure of the delicate child to the evil eye.[3]

On the whole, the family treatment of the infant is relatively more protective and more attentive compared with the later period of childhood. Nursing children usually fare better than their older siblings in health and appearance. The protective attitude towards nurslings and toddlers could

[1] M. Hemansin, 'Infant Mortality in Egypt', Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished), London, 1940, p. 228.

[2] Worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1946*, p. 31.

[3] According to *Vital Statistics* in Egypt, diseases responsible for infant mortality according to their death poll are infectious diseases, respiratory system diseases, diarrhoea and congenital diseases.

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where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of schoolchildren during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

150 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

460 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

460 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥîn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
824 necks of the hapless infants.
755

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en-
[144] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[198] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
197 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organised* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

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present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered. 304 463 [164]

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out. 304 531

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt, 304

843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

854

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition. [758]

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

269 The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes. [169] [42]

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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

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164 515 854

are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

757 278

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

[756] [755] [291]

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sidī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

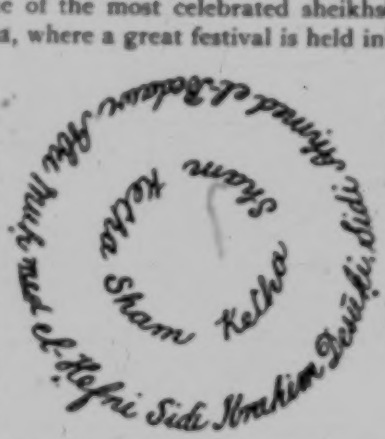

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

● 164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (11). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

up and is transmitted in water and sodden ground, in the /164 stagnant village ponds, and, since the development of perennial irrigation, in the standing water of runnels and badly levelled canals.

Bilharzia is not in itself a serious disease. But, beginning with the passing of blood in the urine, it often develops, through lack of attention, into complications such as the stone, fistula, and ulceration of the penis. The infection may reach the kidneys, the liver and even the eyes. Above all, it lasts for 18 or 20 years. 90% of the male fellaheen are affected by it and become accustomed to passing blood and feeling continually below par.

Bilharzia is transmitted through urine and water; hookworm through earth and excrement. Like bilharzia, hookworm is a collective disease, a permanent epidemic, and is introduced into the system by a parasite which passes through the skin. Ankylostomiasis is less widespread than bilharzia, but more dangerous, since it consumes the red corpuscles of the blood (41).

As the fellaheen never make use of human dung, and 514 have never learnt the use of latrines, they relieve themselves /164 no matter where. If they are already infected with the worm, [24] every such place is a new source of danger to their fellows, who walk barefoot or lie down heedlessly on the ground. The worm can move several feet in the darkness; it settles in damp soil, whence it passes through the skin to the intestines.

You may see countless men and women in the prime of /164 life who are stricken with this disease, their faces puffy and lifeless with its ravages. Neither their vigorous constitution, their youth, nor the treatment they receive has been able to save them.

Malaria, spread by the ricefields and *birkas*, affects 65% of the fellaheen, and in some villages East of the Delta as many as 90%.

What makes these three diseases so alarming is not so much their inherent seriousness as their constantly widening extent, and the way in which the fellaheen themselves by their work and their manner of life contribute unconsciously to the perpetuation of the evil. It should also be remarked that the Government's measures to combat these diseases have not as yet had very much effect.

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (").

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class. If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 27]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with stewed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (44) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. [164] [167] [702]

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

I

THE TAḲRÎFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him before her with his lower extremities extended, while she remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way. Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great force, the result of which is often death. She does all this without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an "operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient. (We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault, because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it) Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

756 choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines
755 depends proportionately upon the employment of violence or gentleness in that " operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that " old woman," saying, " The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain ? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the " prescription " of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the " old woman " who " prescribed " this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

000 THE common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers).
● 064 Their " prescriptions " would make a bereaved widow laugh !
755 For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there be found in it " the bone of the unbeliever "—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the " old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

THIS word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22]. [164]

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 976
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'akīk*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce;* and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756
market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755
children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756
the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753]
So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 798
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl 753
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother 764
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throw- 756
ing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women." 831

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness. 755 778 751 [164]

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view. 842

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement, is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives " are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

" And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXVI

THE TANFĪḤA

E F 164

THIS is one of the absurdities, the validity of which has overcome the minds of the simple in our happy country. The people of Upper Egypt call it the *Talwīḥa* (" *swinging* "), but amongst the inhabitants of the towns, such as Cairo and Alexandria, it is called (معمل) (sic) [Al-Mu'aumad (?)] and so also by the people of the provinces of Lower Egypt. With all its names it means the acute relaxation of the bowels, which attacks very young children. The " cure " is as follows: The " old wife " orders the child to be placed in a spacious woollen cloth which is wrapped round it several times till it is used up. Then two women take hold of the ends of this cloth, with the wretched child imprisoned in it, and turn it round following a perpendicular circular motion during more than a quarter of an hour. This, in truth, is the easiest and quickest way to kill children, because the child, who has the misfortune to be born to the person whose thoughts are controlled by the power of [p. 53] delusion and ignorance, is seized with concussion of the brain due to the wicked circular motion, and dies from lack of breath. In the cities mothers procure drugs from the " old wives "; the one which I have seen most commonly used being white lead (ceruse) (or carbonate of lead), mixed with the white of an egg. Now it is well-known that ceruse contains poisonous materials. So when it is placed on the child's belly it screams with pain. Then the mother continues in the thought that his weeping is only from the original pain which was the cause of her treating it with such a harmful remedy.

F 755 E 757 278

XXVII

" THE STRANGER " (GHARĪBA)

F 164

THE common people use this term generally for a number of eye ailments, especially sha'ra or trichiasis.[1] Many women

[1] [Introversion of the eyelid.]

Many women

756 in the villages are famed for the "cure" of them. One of them is known as Sitt Umm Ḥusain. She resides in the village of Ibrāhīm Aghā in the district of Shubrakhīt. Her "specific" 757 is to take a piece of the hollow stalk of the bamboo (*ghāb Fārisī*), and split it lengthways down the middle, and place in it the skin of the patient's eyelid. In view of its flexibility it squeezes upon the eyelid and hinders its nourishment, so that it becomes violently inflamed, perhaps extending to the neighbouring parts, and destroying the eye. The result[1] of this ill-omened treatment is that the part squeezed becomes affected [164] with gangrene, the eyelid becomes separated from the eyeball, and the latter becomes exposed to all external influences, great and small, there being now nothing to protect it from injury, not to mention that the patient through this "operation," becomes ugly and hideous, the sight of him frightening children and offending grown up people.

Many others besides Sitt Umm Ḥusain there are who go round the villages rooting out eyelids as if they thought Allah created them unintentionally.

XXVIII

HEALING OF THOSE BORN BLIND (CATARACTOUS)

757 298 A NATIVE of Mandūra in the Gharbīya Province claims that he has done some of the things for which Jesus (on whom be peace !) was noted, and has made the blind to see (or, rather, to describe him by what results from his works, he gives those who have eyes, eyes to see). What he does is, he anoints the ophthalmic patient with *koḥl*, which he makes himself, and in ten days he is "cured."

I was informed by one of the leading people of the Buḥaira Province about some antimony [*koḥl*] which he bought from

[1] [Dr. A. F. MacCallan, writing in the *Egyptian Gazette* (April 7th, 1927) on the development of Ophthalmology in early Arabic Literature mentions this popular Fellahīn "cure," and adds: "*The trichiasis entropion is occasionally cured* (by this method), *but always at the expense of a shortened upper lid, and the frequent production of lagophthalmos.*" Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *kohl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarītī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]

(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *ḥūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *kohl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awḫar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]

[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]

[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *ḥabbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, *XII*, 207. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, "Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī Shaukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began "treating" his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

[1] [See note above p. 43.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

FEE 756 878

drugs, salts and acids and alkalis with labels, on which were written their names in Latin; in very indistinct letters on account of their age. The bystander could not help suspecting that this was merely the leavings of some pharmacist, which this man had bought up after the death of the owner.

On turning my head to the right I saw written on one of these bottles "sulphuric acid," so I asked his lordship about the contents of the bottle, in order to try him, that it might put an end to my suspicions regarding him. He answered straightway, "This is oil of mandragora, or apples of the Jinn." Then he produced a vessel gilded on the outside and said, "This is the *Kohl* (stibium) of the Forty. It puts and end to obscuration of the surface of the eye, and I produced it myself by boiling it in oil of rose mixed with the grease of serpents forty times." He generously presented each of us with some to experiment with, but when we had left his dwelling we threw what was in our hands on the ground, except one of us who was determined to try it. He put a little of it in his eye, and the next day was afflicted with ophthalmia of the cornea which took him fifteen days' treatment to get over its evil effects.

Mark the difference, O you who are intelligent and skilful, between the dwelling of this ignoramus aping the physician and [p. 61] the clinic of one of our keen native doctors. You will find the difference distinctly visible. While the former rejoices in success and prosperity, the latter suffers ill-luck and neglect.

XXX

HEADACHE (ṢUDĀ')[1]

F 164 753

THIS is applied to many illnesses, but is only rarely an original illness. It arises from decay in the bone of the occiput,

[1] [Professor E. G. Browne, in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine* mentions (p. 4) that this noun of pain appears in the Latin version of the Ḳānūn of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) as Soda (*Sermo universalis de Soda*), a term which must have bewildered those without the Arabic original. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the "treatment" of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is "cured."

The explanation given of these "cures" is that sciatica is a disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are 854
his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, 755
and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, 753
before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. 164 ●
Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heavi- 753
ness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The 757
"operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. [164]
Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the 563
Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and 759

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]
[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is 755
clear that those who thus imitated the " old wives " of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay 164
(caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have 752
become famous for " curing " it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He has two " treatments " for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization ; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter " method " makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is " the [753]
poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last 757
year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is *Ghafūr* (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

753 But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
152 cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared
861 especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers [562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

757 " AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they ' prescribed ' incensing,
Which an " old wife " among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication ?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation ?
And does their ' incensing ' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton ? "

Some of the " old wives " in the provinces were famed in past ages for their " cure " of venereal disease by " incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An " old wife " came to " incense " a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from [164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the " incensing " of the " doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkh.a*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

"MIXING" (MADHAḲ)

Madhaḳ literally means "mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. And they "prescribe" for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this "method" is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (أم الرأس) "mother of the head"], and there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

[1] [This "mixing" or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-khartīt*) consists of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

164 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIḲḲA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (مطبوخ النارنج).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khaḍra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shisha*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

789 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

755 231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

755 164 292 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

"THE BLUE WATER" AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either "moving" or "smiting," is very common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from "the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless "cures" whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counter-agent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]
[2] [See note, p. 54.]
[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

752 old "method" which is only of advantage to its practitioner, who lives comfortably in the shadow of its effect on the minds of simpletons.

X

THE "CURE" FOR ULCERS

● 164 THE "old wife" prescribes for the patients who are suffering from chronic ulcers (*nawāṣīr*) having fetid purulent secretions, the following "prescription": Mix one part of snuff (or 759 tobacco dust) with one part of natron (its usual name [p. 22] is *atrūn*, and it is sesquicarbonate of soda). Pour on them two parts of very pure olive-oil and boil the whole for a while. Then anoint the tube of the ulcer (*nāṣūr*) and it will be cured.

Some excellent people have attested to me that it is a "cure" that has been proved by actual observation to be advantageous. It may be that time will show the truth of this experiment and beneficial remedy. But it is well known to-day that there is no cure for ulcers except scraping them with special instruments, or erasing the ulcerous tube, thus removing the cause, and sewing up the new wound. Sometimes cautery with a heated probe, or an electric cauterizer is employed.

Explanation of the "prescription." The snuff is a cauterizer, and on its entering the wounds it awakens their vitality, which has been weakened by the passage of time, and it changes the nature of the vile secretions for the better. Then fleshy pieces grow up filling the cavity of the ulcerous tube. (But that only results on the supposition that an ulcer is found continuing after the removal of its cause, such as ulcers resulting from a bullet which has entered a muscle deeply, and remains for some time with the surrounding part suppurating. Then it is extracted and the road leading to its original lodging-place has the appearance of [p. 23] an ulcerous tube. But appearances are not evidence).

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

THE "CURE" FOR ITCH AND DRY SCAB

AMONG the severest of the diseases that afflict mankind is skin-disease (or eczema) with its different varieties, either moist or dry. The "cure" for the dry variety among the "old wives" is to clothe the afflicted one in a garment of pure silk. 164 755

A very trustworthy person has related that he had not omitted to use everything prescribed by modern medicine, but without success. So he employed the silk garment and his ailment passed completely away. Indeed the prescription of the "old wife" agrees with what is set down in Canon Law regarding prohibiting men from wearing pure silk except in the case of itch.[1] [984]

XII

THE "CURE" FOR PROTUBERANT TUMOURS

THE "old wives" do not stick at any of the diseases unless it is outside the sphere of trickery to affect its "cure." They do not trouble whether by the process of imagination, either through the power of the Jinn, or the development of thought, a "cure" will result. So beware of a very valuable "cure" for tumours which appear on the skin. 755

The patient seeks out a hen, free from blemish, without a single white feather, and watches her until she lays an egg in a place unreached [p. 25] by the rays of the sun. Then he brings lentils to her with their seeds to all appearance the same in number as the tumours on his body. After he has emptied

[1] [For the references to the prohibition of silken garments, see A. J. Wensinck: *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leiden, 1927, p. 45 f. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

155 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[996] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [953] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

●164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

F 164 F 757

bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

E F 278 757

I WAS one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *mufattaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūḳḳa* or *uḳḳa*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¾ lb. Tr.]

E [804]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

EF 278 757

After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*ḥiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

EF [832] [843]

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

F 164 757

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawallī* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XVII

"WINKING" (ṬARFA)

•164 SLIGHT shocks falling upon the eye-ball cause irritation which often leads to a dangerous state on most occasions. All such afflictions arising from an external influence are named 757 by the common people *Ṭarfa*. They have sundry "cures" for it. One of these is effective for the time being. It consists of closing the eyelid and placing the hand outspread above it. Then another person puts his mouth to this hand and blows [758] upon it with his foul breath, deep breaths one after the other. Shortly after we see them ordering the milk of a woman to be brought and a drop placed in the eye. Then it is "cured."

The true explanation. As for the blowing upon the eye, it is of little account, since it has no real influence upon it. But milk has been used since ancient times for placing [p. 33] in the eye for all light irritations which occur therein. It is very good. Many *koḥl* manufacturers still order it even to-day.

The true treatment. The handiest and simplest thing for the patient is to boil a little Greek camomile [*bābūnig Rūmī*] (or "the chickens of 'Ali's mother") and throw into that hot mixture a piece of tissue, which he places at once upon his eye for the space of a quarter of an hour for two hours. Remove all customary eye-salves. There is no harm in using human or animal milk, since it mollifies the inflamed condition. But if the eye is in a serious state, then the first thing is to hasten to an oculist.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XVIII

A "CURE" FOR ITCH (GARAB)

ITCH is common among children in the elementary schools in the villages on account of the meeting there of the many conditions which help its development, such as dirtiness, moisture and carelessness. They "cure" it in the beginning by breakfasting every morning on a piece of "camel-driver's sulphur"—(Thus it is known among them. It is natural sulphide)—inside the yolk of an egg. If that is not successful there is the final "cure." The poor child is taken to the sewer of the village mosque [p. 34] and his body besmeared with those putrid substances, which they leave upon him for two complete days. Some of the Shaikhs of the villages exceed the bounds in the efficacy of this "cure." I have seen companies of them leading their boys to the sewer of Sīdī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūḳī at the time of the *Maulid* [or Birthday Festival] to perform with them there. This method is harmful and a hindrance to a real cure.

The true explanation. Nobody denies that compounds of sulphur are beneficial in the curing of all diseases that are named parasitic. But in spite of that there is no escape from observing cleanliness. Treatment by "camel-driver's sulphur" is good—(the sewer method, of course, is a quite different matter)—because the sedimentary substances contained in sulphurous substances touch the affected skin as agents and act strongly. So would that people smeared the body of the child with sulphur instead of with those filthy substances!

XIX

THE "CURE" FOR BALDNESS

THOSE exposed to being smitten by it in the villages are also the children of the elementary schools, because, like the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

preceding, it is an infectious parasitic disease, and found in very hideous forms. Through neglect of it, and failure to attend to it at the beginning, it baffles physicians and becomes a danger.

The thoughts of the "old wives" are perplexed regarding its "cure." Some of them order anointing with petrol; others order tar and other substances. All are profitless. The famous method is "the cap of pitch" [*ṭaḳīyat-al-zift*] in other words, making the pitch (which is the resin of certain coniferæ) flow upon the head of the patient hot, in the form of a skull-cap[1] and leaving it for weeks, nay months. Then the quack comes one day to pull off the cap—a day of distress for the patient!—since his hair, nay his skin also, sticks to the pitch. So he suffers tortures, and blood flows after the terrible uproar of pulling off the cap. Very often the patient faints on account of the intensity [p. 36] of the pain and the great loss of blood. Then after that there is brought half an oke[2] of common salt crystals and the head of the patient is rubbed with them violently.

Do not ask about the pains of this savage method. After a month has passed the "operation" is repeated. There is no need to witness it to know that the second "operation" is more grievous than the first because the healing of the wound is not complete and the new skin is pulled off a second time, and the pains are doubled. In view of all this, say whether this method is advantageous with its violence and danger! Even if this method were successful sometimes, the success would be due solely to the exclusion of the air by means of the cap prescribed against the parasite, because it ranks as a parasite called aerobic, that is "air-loving."

[1] [*Ḳalansuwa*, or *ḳulansiya*, the name of a tight-fitting cap often worn under a turban. Tr.]
[2] [See above, p. 111.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

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XX

SHAHKA

F 164

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahka* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahka* (injury by the evil eye) or *nazra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

F 753 754

F 757

The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

E 757 758

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [calumba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little, the soft paste is taken and

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR

E 750 378

applied to the wound. It resembles soft collodium[1] except that the latter is beneficial because of its transparency, which makes it allowable to witness the progress of the wound beneath it without the need of lifting it and causing the fleshy surfaces to bleed.

XXII

THE "REMOVED" HEART

F

164 753

We see the "old wives" diagnosing anæmia as "the removal of the heart and its being changed from its place as a result of an accident." They "cure" it as follows: The patient sits as in the case of *Taḳrīfa* (see Part I, p. 19) [p. 39] and the "old wife" sits down in front of him and places her fore-finger under the xiphoid cartilage, which they imagine is "the feather of the heart" (ريشة القلب) or its gristle. Then after moving it a little the "old wife" cries out, as if she had stumbled upon a buried person, saying: Oh, my child! Your heart is removed and the "feather" (*rīsha*) is falling considerably!

755

The true explanation. They assert that the xiphoid cartilage is bound to the heart by strong ties so that when the heart changes it pulls it in because it is like a tent-peg holding it firm. They "cure" the patients by one of two methods:

(1) The first is an endeavour to raise the above-mentioned "feather" to the top, i.e. returning it to its original position. It is necessary to resume this "operation" for seven days, the action lasting each day about ten minutes.

(2) The second is famous for its success. The patient is ordered to go to the door of a house opening on the west, and to hang by his right hand from that door in such a way that the side mentioned carries the rest of his body. He must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain thus without breathing for a space of time varying according to the ability of the patient. When he feels he is without power to retain his

[1] [Pyro-xylin, gun-cotton. Tr.]

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāshela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be "cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 ḤASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his 752 numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

18.

539x
854

One of the songs with which the mothers quiet the little ones, and in which one often seeks in vain for the connection. This song, with a few variations, was heard by Goldziher in Cairo in 1873. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft 33, p. 612.)

Ya naṭara, ṣubbīha,
ḫalli-l-wizz yeʿūm fīha.
Bint uḫti ʾarʿa ʾarʿa,
ḫadha-d-dīb u-rāḥ yirʿa,
5 *ʾarʾašha taḥt et-tirʿa.*

O Rain, pour it out!
Let the geese go swimming in it!
My little niece is scab-headed, scab-headed, [164]
The wolf has caught her and gone to eating,
5 He has gnawed her to pieces in the canal.

1. Compare No. 17, l. 2.
2. Let it rain hard enough to form puddles, in which geese can swim.
3. Owing to the filth in which the country children grow [515] up, scabby heads are not rare.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
„ 5–9 „	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
„ 10–19 „	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
„ 20–29 „	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
„ 30–39 „	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
„ 40–49 „	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
„ 50–59 „	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
„ 60–69 „	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
„ 70–79 „	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
„ 80–89 „	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
„ 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of school-children during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 794 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to ' walk ' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 392 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 622 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'AFĀRIT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

462 312 [515] 165 115

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.

[2] ii, 90.

[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.

[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.

[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.

[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.

[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.

[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.

[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

847 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to " cure " it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the " beating " of the temple-vein. They mean by this the " cutting " of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the " cutting " of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the " beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for " beating the vein " at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this " cure " for *Ṣudā'* by " cutting the temple vein " is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an " operation " of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

" Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a " cure " for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this " operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this " operation " see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[83] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do,
165 great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
● 166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence
464 on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is /183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- /185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe /183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, /185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" ("). As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the /166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside /162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary /166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other /184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

F
184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened — a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper
F Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower
162 Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The
166 *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo
186 shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according
166 to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves
E that they hope to return. They find work most often as
464 building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess* ; they
465 are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 a day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and always in danger of unemployment.

E After a few years' experience some come back to their
166 native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off
464 to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the
511 city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers,
557 fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma 'ultē-lak, ya ma 'ultē-lak 593
winte lissa fi-'angetak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šar'īye,
5 *yaḥdūk bilād el-ṛarbīye,*
tiṣbaḥ 'adīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak 'ala-l-mu'dāf rāiḥ
teṭalla' er-raml es-sāiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Shar'īye,

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed ? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (") finds that the foods— and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. [164 167 702]

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and this contributes in no small way to the satisfaction of the individual's psychological need for social recognition.[1] These are some of the forces the writer regards as maintaining some sort of healthy effect in the growing up of children in Silwa; otherwise the strain of childhood would have been unbearable in a predominantly authoritarian community where the child is regarded as its father's possession. Erich Fromm would consider such a community as thwarting the child's legitimate strivings for freedom, independence, and self-fulfilment. He maintains that the social arrangement of an authoritarian patriarchal society, frustrating man's wishes to self-realization, tends to create in him a destructive passion, which in turn must be suppressed by external or internal force.[2]

If one thinks of the disciplinary policies of childhood in terms of a straight line, at one end of which is the easy-going discipline of some primitive societies, and at the other end the harsh discipline of a society like the Japanese, it is apparent that the type of discipline to be found in Silwa is closer to that of the Japanese society than to that of those primitive societies.

The period of childhood is considered by the adult as an unimportant stage which should be quickly passed over. The writer seldom noticed grown-ups talking about their childhood, and his informants found it very difficult, even unbecoming, to recall their childhood days. The villagers' attitude towards children is indeed a mixed one, regarding them both as supernumerary entities as well as a sub-adult. A child is an economic asset as well as a social nuisance. It was shown in Chapter I how the child is continuously expected to take over from the adult the tasks which it is capable of performing as a part of its acquisition of discipline—'adab'. On the level of social action, however, it is supposed to be insignificant and to have no opinion of its own. On the whole, a son or a daughter, whether young or old, cannot replace the parent in performing formal social obligations; for example, taking gifts to circumcision and wedding ceremonies or entertaining a guest, unless there are extenuating circumstances which justify it. The child's world is always connected with the female world rather than the grown-up male world. In the ceremonial celebrations, children are usually mixed with women more than with men. If children happened to be in a male gathering, they must keep to their place, and be able to withdraw at the earliest opportunity to play on their own, or to join the female crowd. At this level of social action, the unity of the social sphere between children and grown-ups tends to break. Although the child's life is directed towards aims, responsibilities, and values similar

[1] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, pp. 47–8. See also Abram Kardiner in *The Individual and His Society*, where he emphasizes the emotional meaning of work: 'There is, first, the intrinsic gratification in work as a form of mastery. This must be credited with being a basic gratification. The satisfactions derived from it are common to all forms of mastery. They give the individual a feeling of effectiveness and control' (p. 30).

[2] Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, pp. 133–8.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

through age and sex groups. The family does not directly play as great a part in the educative process in Silwa as in towns or cities of Egypt. An equally if not more important part is played by other children, adults other than the parents, play-groups, gossip gatherings, groups of girls going to fill their jars, or groups of boys fetching fertilizer, situations of hand-washing, tea-serving, ceremonies and celebrations, and by hundreds of other life situations which go to communicate the heritage of the village life to the growing child. In Silwa, like the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala, 'the heritage of the group is communicated in situations much less clearly defined than institutions . . . (through) that multitude of daily situations in which by word or gesture, some part of the tradition is communicated from one individual to another'.[1] The literary and written aspects of the village Islamic culture are left to a few literary people who teach or recite the Holy Book and enlighten the other villagers on religious matters; while theoretical religious knowledge is the concern of a few, all are concerned with the ritual aspects of religion such as prayers and fasting.

Moreover, the slow rate of social change in the village has hardly affected the aims and methods of socialization. Children are reared approximately in the same way as their parents and are expected to imbibe the same cultural assumptions, and follow the same path. A qualification must be added here. Growing up in a folk homogeneous society does not necessarily mean a smooth, painless or unhampered process. But however traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as viable, and to that extent, bearable.[2] Intensive case studies would certainly reveal the various problems of social adjustment, and show the compensatory mechanisms of those who fail to measure up to the ritual assumptions and requirements.

[1] Robert Redfield, 'Culture and Education in the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 644.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, p. 633.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

In Artas, the Palestinian village studied by Granqvist, the uneasiness in this stage of adjustment presents itself in a different way. As marriage in Artas is in the patrilocal residence, the bride, before leaving her family, would make demands on the bridegroom's family and make sure that her family's wishes have been fulfilled, before she is placed on the camel going to her bridegroom's house.[1]

As for the bride, she now starts her seclusion in the house till she brings forth a child and is never allowed to go out and never seen by a married man, even her husband's father and her married brothers. Her main job is to attend to her husband, to receive him when he knocks at the door, and to serve food to him. One of the main difficulties of newly married girls is their adjustment to the new situation, where they must break away from their previous life and assume a responsible role. The difficulties, however, are smoothed out in the matrilocal marriage period, where the bride's mother is really the one who, behind the scenes, provides her son-in-law with his requirements. This attention of the mother to her son-in-law usually makes her unmarried sons and daughters jealous, as epitomized in the common saying referred to earlier. Under her mother's supervision and instructions, the bride comes to learn the appropriate conduct of womanhood. It is probably during this period that she receives sex information as the occasion arises. Moreover, her previous playmates do not sever their contacts with her; they still go to see her and 'have a hand dip of henna' with her; but she is not allowed to join their games or play with 'toys'. Other women, especially relatives, come to see her, give her advice and praise her 'halo' and jewellery. On the whole it seems that the girl comes under her mother's authority at this stage more than any other stage of her development. During this period of seclusion the direct influence of the mother is undoubtedly supreme, even much more than the husband. The latter, in fact, is not expected to linger in his bride's house. Except for his mealtimes, he should not remain in the house except when he comes in late at night after finishing his entertainments with his friends.

Indeed, the first year of marriage, for both the husband and wife, bristles with difficulties that may lead to divorce. According to my informant, Mahmoud, marriages are more prone to break down during the first year than at any later period. This statement seems plausible, since during the first year especially, the economic, social and psychological adjustments or maladjustments not only between the spouses, but also between their families, develop.[2] The amount of talk, gossip and vitupera-

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. II, Helsingfors, 1935, p. 72.

[2] For a well-documented discussion on the economic, social and psychological factors curbing the Moslem's nominal freedom of divorce, see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. According to official statistics the ratio of divorce per thousand of the population of Egypt for the five years between 1942 and 1946 was 8·3, 9·2, 9·6, 8·9, 8·1 respectively. *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 47 (in Arabic).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754 If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761] dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754 corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753 clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755] figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754 in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171 many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776 people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787 among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared. 757 278

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better. 757 171

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment! 757 [372]

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again. 752 278

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able 757

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and 515 dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practi- 855 cally all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern [171] counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are 753 adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of [171] Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

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[778]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
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[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Coots MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145).

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance.

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

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I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

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As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

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A
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An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F
A
342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malākif* (singular *malkaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A
113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt

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[1] Dr G. Scholem refers me to T. Canaan, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914), p. 22, who states that "The tribes of demons are governed by princes. There are seven chief princes. . . . They are called Murrah, Maḡhab, el-Aḥmar, Barḳân, Shemhûrish, el-Abyaḍ, and el-Meimûn." See also E. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du nord* (Algiers, 1909), p. 120.

[2] See note 1. Barakân, or Barḳân, means 'Shining One.' He appears as Barakon in an invocation addressed to him in the *Clavicula Salomonis*; see H. Gollancz, *Sepher Maphteaḥ Shelomo* (*Book of the Key of Solomon*), *an exact Facsimile of an original Book of Magic in Hebrew* (Oxford, 1914), pp. xii ff.

[3] For the use of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Égypte antique de l'ancien empire jusqu'à l'époque copte* (Paris, 1925), vol. i, p. 158; vol. ii, pp. 169 f., 171 f., 174 f., 178, 182.

[4] Otherwise not known. He is not included in the well-known list in note 1.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VII

THE FELLAH AT HOME

On his return from the East in 1932, Christian de Caters spoke as follows about the houses of the fellaheen (*Echo de Paris*, 16.6.32): "I have seen the poorest villages of a Mancha in Spain, the hovels of the Cape Verde islanders, and the reed huts of the Lundas, a savage tribe in the depths of Angola, but nowhere have I seen greater distress than in Egypt."

On the other hand, Lozach, in *Le Delta du Nil* (Cairo, 1935), finds that the fellah's home is "not far behind the stone or mud huts with a thatched roof which are still common in many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is in any case far superior to the miserable hovels in which most of the peasants of Tunisia or Algeria live".

Which statement is one to believe? It all depends on the point of view and the standard of reference. Such comparisons are in all probability misleading, especially when the cases compared are not parallel. A personal impression or opinion is not so useful as an actual description of the fellah's home, and of his life in it. This will show us how far the house is suited not merely to the fellah but also to the land he works on.

We have seen the public parts of the village. Let us look now at the private dwellings of the fellaheen, without concerning ourselves with the big house belonging to the landowner or the residence of the *'omda*.

There are certain exceptions to be noticed first: —

1. Stone houses, which are found on the edges of the desert in Upper Egypt. The nearness of the cliffs makes it possible for the fellah to transport the stones for building in his basket. Some of these houses have a vaulted or domed roof.

2. Red-brick houses, without pointing, which are quite common in Lower Egypt. These presuppose a certain standard of living.

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers,
and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without
them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for
as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have
taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels
an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice
or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swell-
ings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment
clearly depends on what plants they have within reach,
and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (44) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these
sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid
on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain
condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on
the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no
point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing ori-
ginal in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole
of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond
Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of
the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fella-
heen are even more effective than their manner of life in
isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which
'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he
founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself
weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these
ritual observances.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an undoubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave. 178 511 735

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements. [171]

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit. 735 185

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" ([72]).

In this low standard of living we must also include moral poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 511 735

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library,

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171] 64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443 186] 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public
[123] that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully
[101] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

L 752 165

Study and research have shown that the cases in which the "treatment" of the *Fargān* proved successful were caused by dogs that were not rabid. It happened one day that a dog bit a man who was passing by. This man went to the encampment of the *Fargān* in search of healing. They "treated" him with cautery like the others. Not many days elapsed until there appeared in him symptoms of real hydrophobia, and night and day he was heard barking shrilly, behaving like a dog in all his actions, while his teeth were gnashing in terror. In this state he continued for a space, then he died.

L F 114

Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the claim made by the *Fargān*, they have only to bring their proofs and, when their assertion is substantiated, we shall be satisfied with the glory that our common people are better than the élite of Western savants. But when we consider the matter we find that such high skill in the healing art is not achieved as a favour, but by habitual toil and industry. And the physician Pasteur, whose fame has filled the two hemispheres, did not gain his immense wealth and widespread reputation, except by devoting his life to the discovery of what he achieved in the treatment of this disease (namely, hydrophobia) after its cure was (thought) impossible. The French government built for him at their own expense a special hospital to which patients go from all quarters of the inhabited world. As for Egypt we do not forget that the Khedivial Government has sent, for the past six years, five of those afflicted with hydrophobia [p. 72] to Paris to be benefited by healing at the hand of that famous physician. So if the *Fargān* are to be trusted in what they assert, why then are they niggardly in publishing the truth, and averse to the praiseworthy place in History that would be theirs on their revealing it ?

E 757 L 759 757

Long ago, Galen said that those bitten by dogs benefited by being given daily a drachm of burned powder of river crabs, and the illness would cease after forty days.

F 171 767

The doctors of India use for those afflicted with hydrophobia a draught of the Indian *Ḥuḍaḍ* or *Ḥaḍaḍ*, a drachm of it upon an empty stomach for forty days, then the hydrophobia will cease. But it is not of the slightest advantage except it be accompanied by, what the *Fargān* do in our country, "ironing"

L 752

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḫ*, plural of *gōḫa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *durra* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *ḳarīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *ḳarīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *ḳarīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *ḳarīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] 7/8

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

7/8 [See category 116, plate facing P. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellâḥîn*.[1]

FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Bahri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *karîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *karîn* and a woman a *karînch* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellâḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the [787] ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing [533] during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows: 787

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly. 533 534

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass [535] clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted.

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171] ●

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/ [171]

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [292]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755

the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief 776
of the Abyssinians (15). 171 ●

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents 755
of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the 776
word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general 177
term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies per- [171]
formed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", es- [171]
pecially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia.

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and 776
in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, [171]
mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God

(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217
(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257
(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/ 776

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits.

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balä Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [534]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

of the Egyptian plough due to its archaic age. In its relatively purest form it survive in plough type V. 174 177 407

2. Begining of the Greco-Roman period the Mediterranean plough extended over many parts of the Delta, and the northern part of Upper Egypt including Fayum. But we are certain that it did not exist in its pure form, at least in Fayum, and was adjusted to the double handle principle. In its pure form it persist now in Eastern Delta. This fact may be explained by the everlasting stream of Arab settlers in this part of the Delta—being geographically exposed to Arabia. Plate 8 shows us that the Arabs of Palastine, and those of Hadramut use the Mediterranean [171] plough. The same plough is used in the Oasis of Siwa, the coast West of Alexandria, and in Libya and North-west Africa. It is only Western and Central Delta which break through this continuous distribution of the Mediterranean plough. One can conclude that this plough type did not reign over the Delta as a whole, even in the Greco-Roman period. We must not imagine that as soon as it came to Egypt, it expelled the older double handled plough. We should also bear in mind that neither the Greek nor the Romans ploughed the land themselves, but formed a governing aristocracy in Egypt. It is highly probable that this plough type gained sure footing after the Arabic settlement in the Eastern Delta. This is due to the fact that the Arabs settled down and cultivated the land themselves somewhere around the 10th century. Bearing this in mind however, does not negate the pre-Arab existance of this plough in different parts of the Delta.

3. Plough type IV, which retains most of the characteristics of the type V, was affected but slightly by the Mediterranean plough. This may be prooved by the fact that the handles does not retreat or project rearwards, but are fixed at nearly right angles to the base. This is a special characteristic of the single handle of the Mediterranean plough.

4. Plough type I has been already mentioned.

5. Plough type III, has been also mentioned, but we may add that this type probably represent the newest adaptation of plough types in Egypt.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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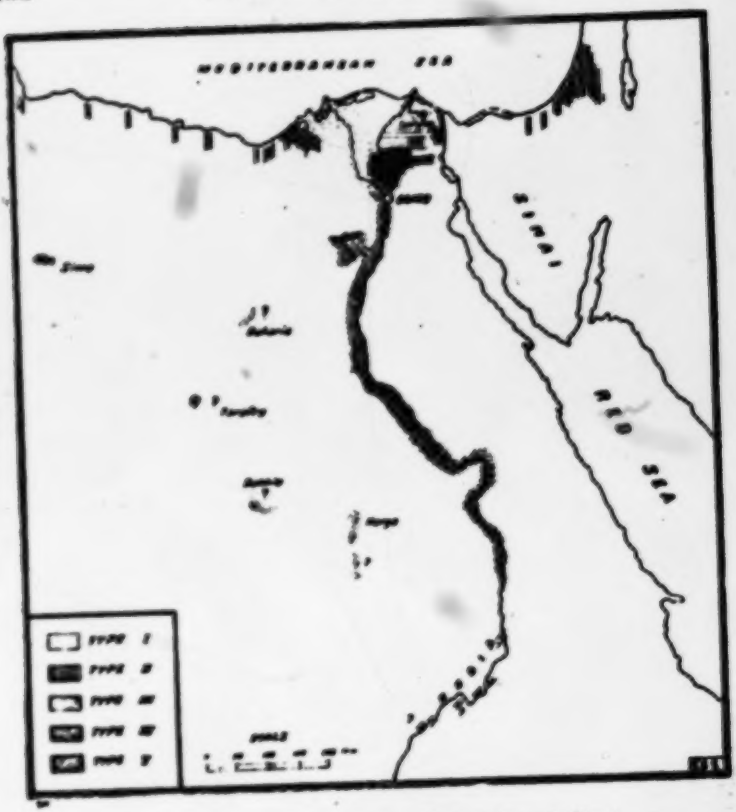

Fig. 3. Regional Distribution of Plough Types in Egypt.

RETROSPECT

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The basic plough types just described are not exclusive to Egypt. We have already seen that plough type II has a wide diffusion in North Africa and the Middle East. It may also exist in Tibit, if the drawings reproduced by Ratzel [1] are true. But already in Tibet we see another

[1] Ratzel, Vol. III, p. 384.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

plough type, which though straight beamed, has no other similarities with the straight beamed Type III of Egypt, but had connections to ploughs of East and South-East Asia. 171● 407*

In any case the plough in Africa is confined to the area north of the Sahara, in addition to its isolated existence in the Highlands of Ethiopia. The southern limits of the plough was observed by Ratzel [1], who drew the southern limits from the south of Morroco, includes most of the Sahara, excluding only Mauritania, and ending by Abyssinia. Baumann disagree with Ratzel and states that the plough is to be found only in three regions :

> « ... haben wir aber in Afrika ein fast zusammenhängendes Gebiet das von Marokko über Algerien und Tunis nach Ägypten und Abessinien führt, wo alte mittelländische und westasiatische pflugkultur beheimatet ist. Die in diesent Raum einschneidenden Lücken (Libyen, Gebiete östlich des mittleren Nil) werden durch das Dazwischentreten nomadisieren der Hirtenvölker erklärt» [2].

Thus Baumann see that the three areas where the plough is to be found in Africa are not connected due to the arrival of the nomads in Libya and Northern Sudan. This may be true but we find a native Mediterranean plough in Tripoli, and in the Oasis of Siwa. This may mean that there is some sort of connection of plough between Egypt in the East and Tunis in the West. Baumann may have been impressed by the reports of different travellers across the Sahara, who did not observe any plough in the Oasis of the Algerian and the Libyan Oasis. But Herzog rightly quotes Rohlfs who stated the existence of the plough in the Egyptian Oasis of Dahla and Harga :

> « ... dass man sich in einer Oase des pfluges bediente, war mir ganz neu. Weder hatte ich die Anwendung dieses Gerates in Draa, Tafilet, oder Tuat gefunden, noch in der grossen und ausgedehnten Oas Fessan» [3].

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[1] Ratzel, Vol. I, map facing p. 21.
[2] Baumann, p. 310.
[3] Rohlfs, p. 298, in Herzog p. 201.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

171 *407 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia, and says that an Egyptian governer of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dahla and Harga use a plough which at least in Harga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts —for as such we would have found plough type V —but can only be explained by the human hazard. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis [487] with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis.

PROSPECTS

241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood —with its renewal of the fertility —then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil —which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in souther Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil —which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqya. This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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(1) Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong [114] to the Egyptian type I, i.e., the split handled plough.

(2) Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VIII]

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CURVED BEAMED PLOUGHS (MEDITERRANEAN REGION)

(a) — Southern Palestine.

(b) — Tripoli.

(c) — Tunisia (After Baumann, p. 311).

(d) — Valley Hadramut Southern Arabia (After Helfritz, Photo 37).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
[121] all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. [114] d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communication of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq [171] (Za'ăzi').

Daḫaltĕ bēt Alla,
la'ıt ḥamām aḫḍar;
bila"amû sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi zurto!*

[231] I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, [788] in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. [771] "It", that is, the house of Allah.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

562 [512] again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are [834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im- [554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that [834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded [171] name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up [184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its [554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed, [195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the [834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common [264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his [783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when [171]
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
527

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give [562] themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [191]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not processed]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder.
One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[172]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

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and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-ʿAmarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht.*[2]

FA [285] [172]

FA 407

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *ṭūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A [286] [532]

G [407]

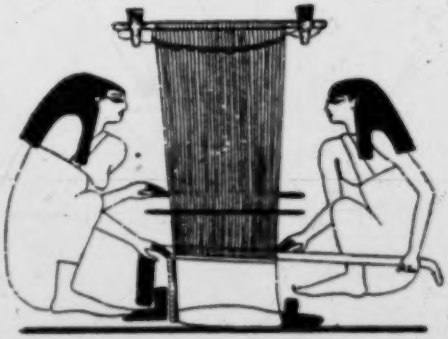


FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Caillaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 17A.

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.
[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. xii, p. 204.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

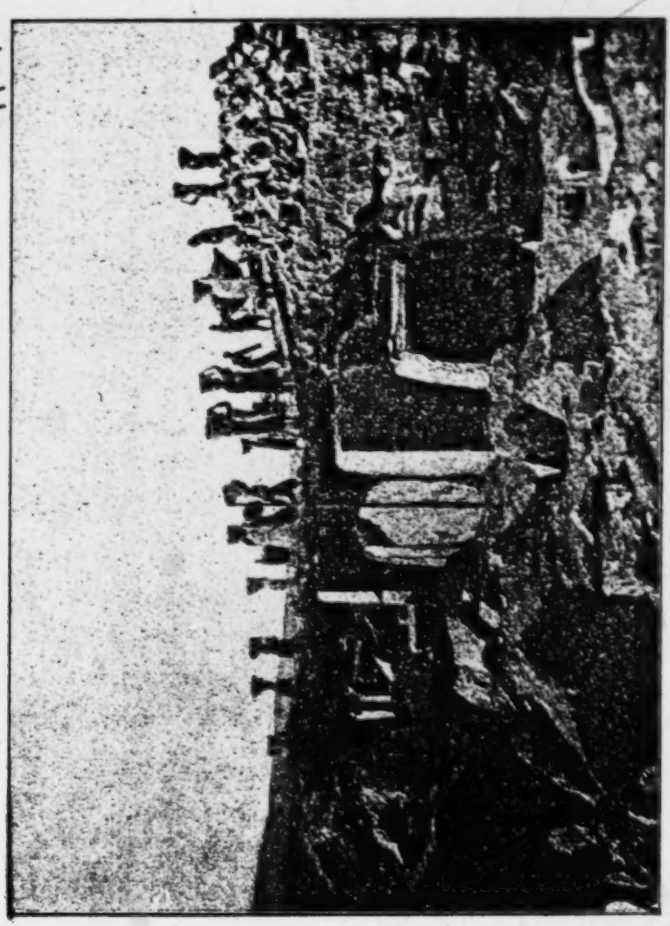
8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: [192] bis-salāme, "in safety" [776] The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmîye (thieves) and 'afārit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullē ḫarâbe welina fīha 'afrit, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. [172] Moreover, Abu Gūrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fūl plant or hog's bean. [262] In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, 1 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

172
482
415



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

At the Work of Excavation.

The Boys with their Rubbish-Baskets. (Excavations at Abusir.)

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

to discuss the development of this concept of culture; it is sufficient only to state the ways in which the term is to be used. Wherever possible, the writer has tried to perceive culture at its three levels, the functional, the historical and the psychological.

What Malinowski expressed as the functional point of view is concerned with the interrelatedness of the various institutions, social structures, artifacts, mental and moral disciplines in the life of the human group studied. The functional approach is basically 'holistic', and culture is conceived as an integral in which the various items are interdependent.[1] As the social system is not an aggregate, but an integrated whole, 'the function of a particular usage is the contribution it makes to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system'.[2]

The second level of 'culture' is the historical; time being as important as space. Temporal factors and historical determinants have been taken into account by many of the present-day 'functionalists' for the understanding of the social present and of the phenomena of social change.[3] [175] It would have been of great value if there had been historical records about the village under study; there are even no past statistics that might indicate the historical development of such social items as population, resources, division of land and the like. For the villagers, history is mainly [173] what is contained in the memories of the living generations through oral transmission, or what is communicated by the literate section of the community, e.g. smatterings of the history of the Arabs, the Prophet and the Saints. It is obvious, however, that the village cannot be considered as a self-contained structural unit but has to be related to the forces of the national history and their repercussions, if any, on the village.[4]

In dealing with the psychological level of culture, the trend is not so clear, since this approach is relatively recent. Moreover, the issue concerning the extent to which a sociological study of this kind should extend its inquiry into the psychological field has not been fully accepted.[5] Added

as super-organic or impersonalistic, provided we are aware that they are two different levels of abstraction, with the former being prior to the latter logically and genetically. David Bidney, 'Human Nature and the Cultural Process', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 380.

[1] B. Malinowski, article 'Culture' in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* and in *Scientific Theory of Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

[2] Radcliffe-Brown, quoted by E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, p. 54.

[3] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 60. For a criticism of the extreme functionalists who ignore the historical dimension see A. Victor Murray, 'The Limits of Functional Anthropology', in *Overseas Education*, Vol. X, 1938–9, pp. 41–5, and Max Gluckman, 'An Analysis of the Sociological Theories of Bronislow Malinowski', *Rhodes Livingstone Papers*, No. 16, O.U.P., 1949.

[4] Julian H. Steward, *Area Research* (Social Research Science Council), New York, 1950, p. 22.

[5] The British school of Anthropology, in contrast with the American school, is on the whole reluctant to include the 'subjective' psychological phenomena of 'culture' in its

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbûḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the adventures of renowned Arab heroes. [173]

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbûḥ, ya 'Abbûḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbûḥ,
wummo warâ bitnûḥ,
wit'ûl: ya waladi,
5 *ya lâbis ez-zaradî,*
sikkinetak ḫûṣa
fil-arḍê marṣûṣa,
ma raṣṣêhâš illâni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
5 O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: ... madfûse, ma raṣṣêhâš illâni, hence I translate: "bury".

[P. 68 is blank]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [173] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

786 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-
796 known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*mursheed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

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121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [174] •
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

789
782
776

[492]
231
243

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

782
776
174

[412]
291
243

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

M

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

Chapter V

THE FELLAH AS A PERSON

We have seen that the fellah's work consists entirely 142
of physical labour and brings his whole body into play. Let us now consider the labourer himself, and examine the fellah from the physical point of view, his race, type, clothing, habits and so on. We shall find once again that water, soil and sun are the physical agents which explain and often even determine the physical constitution of the fellah.

Despite this dependence on the material environment, the liberty of the human will introduces an element of variety. But the will in its turn is subject to another factor, conformity to tradition, and this in the end produces the same result — stability.

(1) *Race and Type*

To what race does the modern fellah belong, and what 144
is his genealogy and origin? No final answer has as yet 174
been found to these questions. Nevertheless, any amount research has been done on the subject, and any number of theories, serious or not, evolved to explain the facts.

To go back no further than the eighteenth century, Volney, for example, declares the fellaheen to be of negroid extraction. Vivant Denon suggests a Caucasian origin. Poinsinet de Sivry, following Pliny the Younger, believes them descended from the Celts. Winckelman suggests Chinese immigration as a solution, and Moreau de Jonnes would put the cradle of the Egyptian race as far away as Polynesia.

Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century, with more knowledge and plausibility, sought a key to the problem nearer Egypt, either in Africa or in Asia.

The theory of African origin is upheld by Hartmann, and later by Flinders Petrie and Maspero, who class the Egyptians with the Ethiopians. Chantre, after anthropo-

144 metric research covering thousands of types both past and
174 present, concludes that the Egyptians, although not absolutely native to their present soil, are essentially Africans, of Libyan extraction, and that if there was any Asiatic infiltration, it had no influence on the race. (24)

Schweinfurth, relying on botanical evidence, believes Southern Arabia to be the source of the Egyptian race, while Amelineau, de Rougé, and (more authoritatively) J. de Morgan, who supports his theory by the comparative study of language, art, customs and physical characteristics, consider Chaldea to be a more likely source. (25)

The theory now in favour, because it is less simple, may be nearer the truth. It can be summed up thus: — In prehistoric times Asiatic invaders, perhaps Arabs or Babylonians, conquered the Nile Valley, and intermingled as the predominant race with people already established there, a composite stock of natives and Ethiopians.

This theory is a synthesis of the two earlier hypotheses, and has the advantage of taking into account facts which support both of them while allowing of the inclusion of the Egyptians in the family of *homo mediterraneus*, a compound of Semitic and Hamitic stocks which peoples North Africa, a great part of Hither Asia, and the shores of the Mediterranean, and shows, where it borders on the black races, certain affinities with the Ethiopians.

The study of profiles in ancient frescoes, and of skeletons discovered in a variety of excavations, obliges us none the less to recognise three original types: the Semites, long-skulled and of medium height; the Mediterraneans, short-skulled, with a short, straight nose; the Libyans, snub-nosed and short-skulled. But the climate and agricultural life have worn away these differences between indigenous and foreign elements and created a specifically Egyptian stock which is no less indivisible than the Nile Valley itself.

174 However all this may be, and although we may not
175 know precisely where the Ancient Egyptians came from, we can be quite sure that the present inhabitants of the country — or at least the fellaheen, and it is with them that we are concerned — are descended from the Egyptians of dynastic times, with whom they are linked without a break and almost without intermixture, despite the passage of fifty centuries and conquest after conquest from abroad.

The conditions of servitude and contempt in which the native 174
population has been held by foreign conquerors since the 175
decline of the Pharaohs have had the effect of preserving the race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, French and English have in this matter all followed the same policy. They have laid hold on the riches of Egypt, and taken power in order to do so, but have neither associated with nor supplanted the fellaheen who produce the wealth. Egypt has always been too densely populated to be suitable for colonial expansion. The conquerors have never been numerous enough to modify the race of the conquered. Their manner of life has always been different, and contact with them has only aroused antagonism.

There has, however, been some penetration of nomads and negroes from near areas. After the Moslem conquest in the seventh century a number of Arabs settled in Egypt, not only in the towns but also in the countryside. As conquerors they were able to impose on the native inhabitants their language, their religion, some of their customs with regard to women, and their cruelty in vengeance. In spite of this the original inhabitants, a hundred times more numerous, especially in the countryside, with women stronger and more fertile, and a manner of life so persistent and unchanging, have marked the Arab elements with their own stamp. In establishing themselves on the black soil the Arabs adopted the traditions of those who ploughed it. This is still noticeable even today in the villages of the Upper Delta, where on account of the richness of the soil Arab immigration was heavier, and in hamlets recently settled on the edge of the desert. After three or four generations the scion can no longer be distinguished from the stock, or else it has proved too dissimilar to take the graft. Assimilation to type is in fact consequent upon assimilation of the fellah way of life. The Arabs who have remained nomadic, and live by the transport of cotton on camel-back, by pasturing flocks, or by robbery and murder,—those in fact known in Egypt as Bedouin, — differ markedly from the fellaheen by their finer features and their more excitable temperament.

Another fusion has taken place in the south, between 174
fellaheen and negroes. Here, the two elements being more 174
dissimilar, the mixture is more noticeable, but the Egyptian 175

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 144 174 175 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

C F 144 779 186 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns, where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F 142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

197 184 *407 177 either in the Fayum Coptic or with a mixture of Greek origins, for we know that Fayum was once one of the important centers of the Greek Ptolemies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH

*407 ● 174 It is a well established fact that the first recorded form of plough is found on the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Many drawings from the Old and the New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt can give us a picture relevant to question of the evolution of the plough. There is also a coloured wooden figure of the plough which belong to the 11th or the 12th dynasty kept in the British Museum, and many original ploughs were found near Fayum which belong to the Greek and Roman periods of the history of Egypt, and which are kept in the different Museums of the world, e. g. Cairo and Berlin. All these examples of the plough covering a very long time span can be used as a sound basis for the study of the history of the present Egyptian plough, if we add to it the description of the plough in the 18th century A. D., recorded by Norden [1], and by the scientists of the French Expedition to Egypt [2].

In an unpublished report in the Agricultural Museum of Cairo, a short note is written on the subject of the ancient Egyptian plough. Extracts from the note runs as follows :

> « The ancient Egyptian traditions alledge that the Egyptians are indebted to Osiris, God of Plants in the Egyptian Pantheon, for the knowledge of the plough. Evidences from early drawings prove that the plough in its original form was worked only by man, and it was only drawn by oxen in the drawings of Meidum, i.e., begining from the third Dynasty. In that form the plough had only one wooden share for ploughing the soft soils ; and had a double wooden share covered by a sheet of bronze to plough harder soils.... The plough was called in the Egyptian language SIKKA. »

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[1] See references under Norden.
[2] See references under Girard.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellanin MR13

In this note it is interesting to see that before the third Dynasty (the beginning of this Dynasty is attributed by Erman to be about 2900 B.C.)[1] the Egyptians used hoes to break the soil, or at least that is what one can understand from the phrase « the plough in its original form was worked only by man ». Drawings of hoes used to break the soil came to us from the remains of the first Dynasty[2]. The plough in its early form, and throughout the Old Kingdom, was composed of a wooden share to which two short handles were fixed from the rear end of the share, while a long beam was fixed to it from the center. The beam ended with a yoke which was at that time attached to the horns of the drawing oxen. In the Middle Kingdom there was no development to this plough, but 407* 174●

> ... in the New Kingdom we see that the handles became longer, and hand grips were added to the handles. We also see that the yoke was replaced by another type which is not attached to the horns, but which rests on neck of the animal ... this method was taken over from the method of saddling the horse... »[3].

Of special interest in the note of the Agricultural Museum of Cairo cited above, is the appellation of the plough in Ancient Egyptian. Sikka as the name of the plough was conserved till now in Arabic Egyptian, and is used to denote the share of the plough in Upper Egypt[4]. Sikka as the name of the plough in Ancient Egypt may have been supplemented by or was used along with another name : [197]

> « ... The name of a plough was HEBI; ploughed land appears to have been ART, a word still traced in the Arabic HART... »[5].

Wilkinson states that the Ancient Egyptians as observed by Diodorus, used hoes extensively, but on occasions used light ploughs which traced slight furrows, while other peasants followed the plough with hoes to

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[1] Erman, p. 16.
[2] Erman, p. 496, footnote 4.
[3] Erman, pp. 496-497. Also see plate 8 of this article.
[4] See list of appellations given in this article.
[5] Wilkinson, Vol. II, p. 393.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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break the tenacious soil. He continues to describe the plough in Ancient Egypt at large as follows :

> « The ancient plough was entirely of wood and of a very simple form like that still used in Egypt. It consisted of a share, two handles ; and the pole or the beam ; which last was inserted into the lower end of the stilt, or the base of the handles, and was strengthened by a rope connecting it with the heel. It had no coulter, nor were wheels applied to any Egyptian plough : but it is probable that the point was shod with a metal sock, either of bronze or iron. It was drawn by two oxen ; and the ploughman guided and drove them with a long goad, without the assistance of reins which were used by the modern Egyptians. He was sometimes accompanied by another man, who drove the animals, while he managed the two handles of the plough ; and sometimes the whip was substituted for the more usual goad. The mode of yoking the beasts was exceedingly simple. Across the extremity of the pole a wooden yoke or cross-bar, about fifty-five inches or five feet in length was fastened by a strap ... At either end of the yoke was a flat or slightly concave projection, of a semi circular form, which rested on a pad placed upon the withers of the animal, and through a hole on either side it passed a long thong for suspending the shoulder pieces, which form the collar. These were two wooden bars, forked at about half either length, paded so as to protect the shoulders from the friction ... »[1].

It is in the Greek and Roman Periods in Egypt that we see another development over the plough of the New Kingdom. Indeed we find in the two types whose sketches are reproduced on plate 6, the prototypes of some of the present ploughs in Egypt. The plough which was found in Darb Geza (Plate 6 b) the origin of which is kept in the museum of Berlin, present us with a wooden share and base much similar to the base of the above described plough type V ; the sides of the base are chiselled in two steps, one to adjust the handles, and the other to fix the beam. The only difference which may be observed in the method of fixing the handles is that it may have been fixed by nails and not with bands like type V. It is also to be noted that the beam was holed at its rear end to enable to

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[1] Wilkinson, Vol. II, p. 392-393.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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insert the rear of the base through it, and a nail may have been used in the projecting part of the rear of the base to prevent the beam from sliding out. This much complicated method was substituted by the simpler method of attaching the beam to the base by means of iron bands used now in type V. The beam here is the usual straight beam used in much of plough varieties in Egypt, but in this prototype there is no pin. Instead and in place of the pin socket in the contemporary ploughs, there are two parallel holes in the base, and a rope end is passed in one of these holes then reappears from underneath in the other hole, then passed over to be wind on the beam. In this way it is certain that the angle of the plough never changed unless the rope was changed. On the fore part of the base there are no traces of nailing a metal share to it, but this does not exclude the possibility that the metal share was adjusted to the base not by nails but by bending the edges of the metal round the sides of the base. This may be proved by the various metal shares (especially of iron) which belong to the Greco-Roman period, and whose origin are kept in Berlin. 407* 174

The plough which was discovered in a house at Harit in Fayum (plate 6 a), and which belong to the Roman period, is kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This type gives up a combination of both contemporary types II and V, as it is clearly exemplified by the presence of a curved beam, and projecting double handles. The very characteristics of the curved beam are represented here: the beam extension which is permanently fixed here with palm fibers, and the pin which supports the beam is made of wood and attached to the beam, not through inserting in a socket, but by binding it to the beam by a rope, probably of palm fibers too. The beam, nevertheless, is additionally fixed by a method which is not found in type II, but by a method retained in the southern tip of Upper Egypt, and in an altered method in Tripoli.[1] This being a rope connecting it to the handles as it is clearly seen in the sketch. The handles are projecting rearwards, and fixed to the base by nails, though another fastner, a rope, tightens them to the base. The grip is lacking in this plough, and the cross bar which figures in the sketch between the two handles may have strengthened the handles, rather than functioned as a grip.

[1] [See category 116, End plate VIII --Analyst]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Baumann, agree to the fact mentioned above, namely that the development of the plough was sharpest with the begining of the Greek and Roman Periods, and describes another form the Egyptian plough from the late period, whose origin is kept in Berlin Museum in the following lines :

> « Wichtig aber ist, dass auch der altägyptische Pflug zu diesem Typus gehört, wenn er auch durch seine Doppelsterzigkeit äusserlich etwas anders erscheint. ... Durch alle Epochen bis zur ptolemäischen Zeit blieb der Pflug mit wenig Änderungen sehr ähnlich... Das in Berlin befindliche Fundstück aus der Gräberstadt im westlichen Theben zeigt eine starke Krümmung der Sterzen. Hier mündet auch der Grindel ein. ... Dieser altägyptische Pflug hat im modernen Ägypten seine direkte Fortsetzung gefunden in den hier auftretenden zweisterzigen Pflügen, die allerdings schon wesentlich komplizierter erscheinen. Hier zeichnet sich eine richtige, von der Sterze getrennte Sohle ab, ohne dass aber in den meisten Fällen der Charakter des alten Spaten-Pfluges verloren geht.»[25].

It is clear from this quotation that Baumann holds the opinion that though the Egyptian plough has undergone several changes from early dynastic period till the present time, still it holds to its basic spade-like character. This opinion is not only Baumann's, but we also find similar opinion in Winkler [26] and both of them based their conclusions on the extensive studies of Lesser [27]. And it is a fact that though the different types of the Egyptian plough may be so complicated in their structure, yet they function on the same principles of a hoe. But we should be aware of the fact that pushing this material similarity far to the realm of culture would lead to much misunderstanding. Using animals in this plough is in itself an evidence of the cultural differences between hoe and plough cultivation, not to mention other differences in techniques of ploughing, production, of crops, and the many other social implications.

Not much description of ploughs in Egypt occur after the Christian Era, and it appear that slow variations took place during this long

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[25] Baumann, p. 313.
[26] See references under Winkler.
[27] See references under Lesser.

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period; variations which took place due to cultural influences encroaching upon Egypt, but while accepting such influences, we are inclined to think that from the Greco-Roman Period onwards, the forerunners of the Egyptian ploughs were fixed; and throughout two millenia, mixture, selection and adaptation played their role in founding the existing plough types. We cannot ascertain any date for the different existing types, but we may say that they do existed in Egypt in a form very near to its present form since at least three centuries. This may find a support in the drawing of the plough by Norden [1] who flourished in the 18th century, and visited Egypt around the middle of that century. It can be also attested by the drawings and description of the Egyptian plough by the scientists of the French Expedition which took place late in the 18th century.

Norden drew a plough in the village Gamase in Upper Egypt, and from the sketch of Norden one can see that plough belong to type IV of the northern part of Upper Egypt. The base may be larger than in reality, and the beam is fixed to the base by a rope instead of the usual nail. The beam extension is present, but not curved upwards like the present extension in both types of Upper Egypt. The whole drawing seems to be more or less stylish in some points, though it gives a good idea about the form of the plough at that time.

The plough drawn by the French in «Description de l'Egypte» [2] is said to belong to lower Egypt (the Delta) and around Cairo. In his comment on the drawing, Girard states:

> «Nous disons seulement que celle (charrue) est particulièrement en usage dans la basse Egypte est aux environs du Kaire; celle de la partie meridionale du Sa'yd est beaucoup plus légère et beaucoup plus grossièrement travaillée.
>
> Pour se former une idée de cette dernière, il suffit de concevoir deux pièces de bois d'un mètre de haut, coudées naturellement à leur extrémité inférieure sous un angle de cent degrés environ. Ces deux pièces, ... sont retenues fermement, à un decimètre de distance l'une de l'autre, par deux chevilles; l'une a quatre decimètres

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[1] Norden, pp. 54-55, and plate LVI.

[2] See references under Girard.

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et l'autre à un mètre au-dessus du même coude. Cette dernière cheville les traverse toutes deux, et présente extérieurement deux poignées par lesquelles on peut la saisir[1].

The assumption that such a plough may be found around Cairo may be right. Furthermore it is implied that this type prevails in middle Egypt, because Girard specialised another plough form for the southern part of Upper Egypt. This plough belong, in our classification, to type IV. If we remember the geographical distribution of plough types, type IV also exist in a pocket between Damietta branch and lake Manzala, but other parts of the Delta belong to different ploughs. Therefore the generalisation of Girard as to the presence of this type all over the Delta is erroneous. Furthermore, making the double handles of the southern Upper Egyptian plough, is not as simple as the description of Girard may convey to the reader. It is rare to find two pieces of tree branches which have the same angle, and as we have seen one of these ploughs in process of making in the desert edge of Luxor district and in the desert edge of Ramadi South –areas culturally poor by the mere facts of there geographical locations and isolations – we are inclined to think that working out the desired angles of such handles needs a good deal of traditional labour and workmanship. Yet complicated techniques are evidences of conservatism rather than progress, hence we can assign older age to ploughs belonging to type V, than for example those of type IV.

This discussion leads us to the crucial question : How did the present types evolved into their different forms?

We have already stated that plough types of the Greek and the Roman periods which we have already described, formed the prototypes of the present ploughs in Egypt. They combined the curved beam, and the double handles in one form or the other. In our classification of plough types we have refered to two basic types, namely the curved beamed type, and the double handled type. Each of these types has his own cultural and geographical region : the first type reigns in the Eastern Delta, while the second type occupies the southern parts of Upper Egypt.

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[1] Girard, Vol. XVII, pp. 22-25.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Now the plough of Dynastic Egypt was more or less double handled, and if the discoveries in Upper Egypt or Fayum reveal, even through the Greek and the Roman periods, the constance of double handles, there is then no doubt that such a characteristic in the Egyptian plough is obviously very old. Again if we consider another part of the plough, namely the beam, we find that the straight beam figures out in all ancient findings, until curved beam appears suddenly in the Roman period, side by side with the straight beam. This sudden appearance is only confined to Fayum, no evidence known refer to the appearance of the curved beam in Upper Egypt, but it is highly probable that curved beam appeared also in different parts of the Delta. We must notice that the curved beam of Fayum appeared in connection with a double handled plough—a fact which either indicate that that type of beam originated with the double handled principle, or that it originated in association with the single handled plough. In view of the constant appearance of the curved beam with the single handle, not only in contemporaneous Egypt, but also in Southern Palestine, Tripoli [1], Tunisia [2], and in South Arabia [3], we may conclude that the combination of double handles and curved beam of Roman Fayum represent an adjustment of the curved beam incursion southwards from the Delta. All this discussion means that the roots of the present type V plough are definitly older than prototype of plough type II.

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Lerer in his studies of the plough has settled down the problem of the curved beam plough. In his steps followed both Winkler and Baumann. Winkler states :

> « Der Krümelpflug weist nun deutlich nach Griechenland und Italien hinüber, dort ist dieser Pflug seit sehr alter Zeit zu Hause. Wenn wir zur Bezeichnung der Grenzsäule das romanisch Balanga (Lateinisch oder italienisch Bilancia) finden, dürfen wir vermuten, dass dieses Wort besonders am Mittelmeerpflug, dem Krumelpflug, gehaftet hat» [4].

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[1] See plate 8, drawings of the plough of Palestine and Tripoli based upon information furnished to me by some palestinian and libyan students in the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Cairo. [126]

[2] See plate 8 c, after Baumann.

[3] See plate 8 d, drawn upon photograph 37 in Helfritz (see reference under Helfritz).

[4] Winkler, p. 163.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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We have no doubt that the single handled curved beamed plough belong to the Mediterranean cultural region, and because Egypt, though lying on the coasts of the Mediterranean, represent in its greater part a somewhat isolated area (especially Upper Egypt), it has evolved its plough type according to its needs. Furthermore Egypt in nearly all its Dynastic history was an independent state, and perhaps that helped towards keeping traditional implements. When the Greek family of the Ptolomies consolidated its rule in Alexandria, Egypt was open now to the influences of the Greek-Mediterranean culture. This still attained its zenith during the Roman occupation of Egypt. From the Roman period onwards Egypt was part and parcel of successive macrocosmos, namely the Roman Empire, the Arabic Empire, and the Turkish Empire. We are sure that so much influences played its part in the development of the Egyptian plough, but these influences did not overcome the two handled plough, which resisted these encroachments and succeeded to remain nearly intact in southern Upper Egypt, and co-existed with the mediterranean single handled plough in the Delta, intact in its isolated pocket in the Prairies of Lake Manzala, and in the northern parts of Upper Egypt. It is only in most parts of the Delta which was incessantly under the influence of the Mediterranean, that a compromise between the Egyptian double handle-straight beamed plough and the Mediterranean single curved-straight beamed type, took place in the plough types I and III, i. e., the split handle-straight beamed type, and the single handle-straight beamed type. The characteristics of plough type I gives us every reason to conclude that it leans heavily on the principle of the Egyptian double handled plough, the only compromise is that the handles are united in the upper part, but the projection of the handles was kept to a certain degree, together with the straight beam. Type III inclines more to the Mediterranean plough in keeping the single handle, but the compromise took place in the change of the curved beam to a straight beam.

One can now safely conclude that the evolution of the Egyptian plough took the following periods and events :

1. Throughout Dynastic Egypt the double handled-straight beamed plough persisted all over Egypt. This plough deserve the appellation

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

of the Egyptian plough due to its archaic age. In its relatively purest form it survive in plough type V. 174 177 407 r

2. Begining of the Greco-Roman period the Mediterranean plough extended over many parts of the Delta, and the northern part of Upper Egypt including Fayum. But we are certain that it did not exist in its pure form, at least in Fayum, and was adjusted to the double handle principle. In its pure form it persist now in Eastern Delta. This fact may be explained by the everlasting stream of Arab settlers in this part of the Delta being geographically exposed to Arabia. Plate 8 show us that the Arabs of Palastine, and those of Hadramut use the Mediterranean plough. The same plough is used in the Oasis of Siwa, the coast West of Alexandria, and in Libya and North-west Africa. It is only Western and Central Delta which break through this continuous distribution of the Mediterranean plough. One can conclude that this plough type did not reign over the Delta as a whole, even in the Greco-Roman period. We must not imagine that as soon as it came to Egypt, it expelled the older double handled plough. We should also bear in mind that neither the Greek nor the Romans ploughed the land themselves, but formed a governing aristocracy in Egypt. It is highly probable that this plough type gained sure footing after the Arabic settlement in the Eastern Delta. This is due to the fact that the Arabs settled down and cultivated the land themselves somewhere around the 10th century. Bearing this in mind however, does not negate the pre-Arab existance of this plough in different parts of the Delta. [171]

3. Plough type IV, which retains most of the characteristics of the type V, was affected but slightly by the Mediterranean plough. This may be proved by the fact that the handles does not retreat or project rearwards, but are fixed at nearly right angles to the base. This is a special characteristic of the single handle of the Mediterranean plough.

4. Plough type I has been already mentioned.

5. Plough type III, has been also mentioned, but we may add that this type probably represent the newest adaptation of plough types in Egypt.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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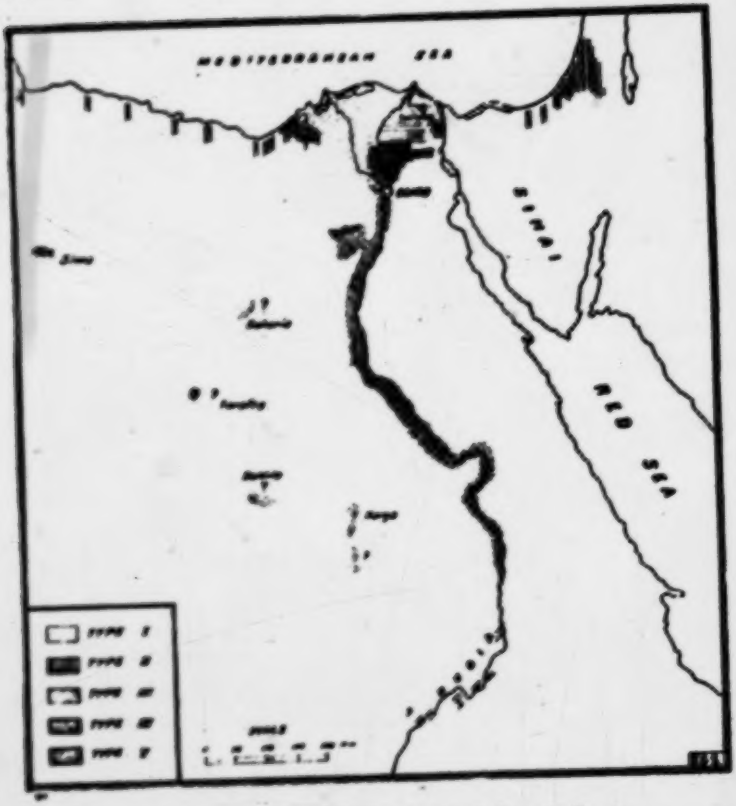

Fig. 3. Regional Distribution of Plough Types in Egypt.

RETROSPECT

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The basic plough types just described are not exclusive to Egypt. We have already seen that plough type II has a wide diffusion in North Africa and the Middle East. It may also exist in Tibit, if the drawings reproduced by Ratzel [1] are true. But already in Tibet we see another

[1] Ratzel, Vol. III, p. 384.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE V]

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EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
I. DYNASTIC PERIOD

(a) — Old Kingdom (after Erman fig. 202).

(b) — 11-12 dynasty 2100-1800 B. C. wood figure, British Museum (after Breasted, Plate 70).

(c) — New Kingdom (18th dynasty). (after Erman, fig. 203).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VI]

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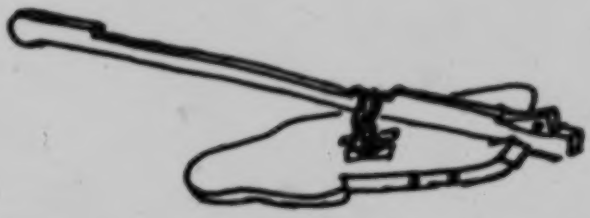
EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
II. GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

(a) — Harit Plough [Fayum], double handle. — Curved beamed Roman Period (origin Egyptian Museum, Cairo).



(b) — Darb Gerza Plough double handle. — Straight beamed Greco-Roman Period (origin Berlin Museum, drawn after Model in the Agriculture Museum, Cairo).

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE VII]

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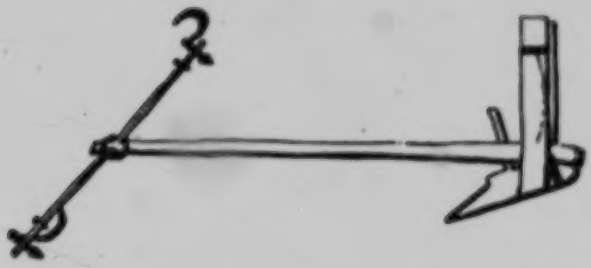
EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH
III. MODERN TIMES

(a) — The Egyptian Plough after Norden (mid 18th. Century) Upper Egypt (See Norden, Pl. LVI, pp. 54-55).



(b) — The Egyptian Plough after Description de l'Égypte [late 18th. Century] (Planche IX, Tome II, Etat Moderne).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

42.

The Inventor of the Shādûf.

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Shādûf is the modern name for a very ancient contrivance for raising water from the river to the higher level of the fields. There is evidence of its existence in Egypt as early as 1500 B. C. It resembles our well-sweep. Tied to the longer end of the lever by a rope, usually of plaited palm-fibre, is a leather pail, while the shorter end is weighted by a large stone or a lump of dry, Nile mud. The pail is filled in the river by the laborer and then emptied into a trench in the field above. (Compare the illustration.) If the banks are high, two or more shādûfs are employed, ranged in tiers, one above the other.

Of course the name of the inventor, Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi is mere invention; just as names are frequently inserted at pleasure, in such songs.

Šawādîf
we-ḥbalha lîf
wedlauha-glād ma'ẓê gudādî.
We-aṣlo mā ṭalla' ei-šawādîf
el-marḥûm Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi.

Shādûfs,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails of goat-skins.
And it was in ancient times, that shādûfs were invented
By the blessed Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi

[P. 42 is blank]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town wends homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*senich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bemiyeh* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *molochich* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with molochich, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the exclusion of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[182] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaalan, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels hehung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

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to discuss the development of this concept of culture; it is sufficient only to state the ways in which the term is to be used. Wherever possible, the writer has tried to perceive culture at its three levels, the functional, the historical and the psychological.

What Malinowski expressed as the functional point of view is concerned with the interrelatedness of the various institutions, social structures, artifacts, mental and moral disciplines in the life of the human group studied. The functional approach is basically 'holistic', and culture is conceived as an integral in which the various items are interdependent.[1] As the social system is not an aggregate, but an integrated whole, 'the function of a particular usage is the contribution it makes to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system'.[2]

The second level of 'culture' is the historical; time being as important as space. Temporal factors and historical determinants have been taken into account by many of the present-day 'functionalists' for the understanding of the social present and of the phenomena of social change.[3] [175] It would have been of great value if there had been historical records about the village under study; there are even no past statistics that might indicate the historical development of such social items as population, resources, division of land and the like. For the villagers, history is mainly [173] what is contained in the memories of the living generations through oral transmission, or what is communicated by the literate section of the community, e.g. smatterings of the history of the Arabs, the Prophet and the Saints. It is obvious, however, that the village cannot be considered as a self-contained structural unit but has to be related to the forces of the national history and their repercussions, if any, on the village.[4]

In dealing with the psychological level of culture, the trend is not so clear, since this approach is relatively recent. Moreover, the issue concerning the extent to which a sociological study of this kind should extend its inquiry into the psychological field has not been fully accepted.[5] Added

as super-organic or impersonalistic, provided we are aware that they are two different levels of abstraction, with the former being prior to the latter logically and genetically. David Bidney, 'Human Nature and the Cultural Process', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 380.

[1] B. Malinowski, article 'Culture' in *Encyclopædia of Social Sciences* and in *Scientific Theory of Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

[2] Radcliffe-Brown, quoted by E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, London, 1951, p. 54.

[3] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 60. For a criticism of the extreme functionalists who ignore the historical dimension see A. Victor Murray, 'The Limits of Functional Anthropology', in *Overseas Education*, Vol. X, 1938–9, pp. 41–5, and Max Gluckman, 'An Analysis of the Sociological Theories of Bronislow Malinowski', *Rhodes Livingstone Papers*, No. 16, O.U.P., 1949.

[4] Julian H. Steward, *Area Research* (Social Research Science Council), New York, 1950, p. 99.

[5] The British school of Anthropology, in contrast with the American school, is on the whole reluctant to include the 'subjective' psychological phenomena of 'culture' in its

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the • 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

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FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

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The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be

[554]

Chapter 1

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt. 101 161

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence. 101 175

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress. 175 178 [636]

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm. 181

●175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

[651 669]

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrizi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

F 162 241 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 175 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (*). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus(**), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (**)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

E F 161 511 In point of fact, once order and public security were re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E F 161 162 The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000 inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Egypt MR1

Turkish Egypt MR2

In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*). E F 423

The State and the Land

T F 175 656 423 651 643

In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

T F 423 651 656

Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

T F 423

In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer, febrayer, mâris, abrîl, myo, yûnyo, yûlyo, oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [485]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley ; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

144 metric research covering thousands of types both past and
174 present, concludes that the Egyptians, although not absolutely native to their present soil, are essentially Africans, of Libyan extraction, and that if there was any Asiatic infiltration, it had no influence on the race. ([illegible])

Schweinfurth, relying on botanical evidence, believes Southern Arabia to be the source of the Egyptian race, while Amelineau, de Rougé, and (more authoritatively) J. de Morgan, who supports his theory by the comparative study of language, art, customs and physical characteristics, consider Chaldea to be a more likely source. ([illegible])

The theory now in favour, because it is less simple, may be nearer the truth. It can be summed up thus: — In prehistoric times Asiatic invaders, perhaps Arabs or Babylonians, conquered the Nile Valley, and intermingled as the predominant race with people already established there, a composite stock of natives and Ethiopians.

This theory is a synthesis of the two earlier hypotheses, and has the advantage of taking into account facts which support both of them while allowing of the inclusion of the Egyptians in the family of *homo mediterraneus*, a compound of Semitic and Hamitic stocks which peoples North Africa, a great part of Hither Asia, and the shores of the Mediterranean, and shows, where it borders on the black races, certain affinities with the Ethiopians.

The study of profiles in ancient frescoes, and of skeletons discovered in a variety of excavations, obliges us none the less to recognise three original types: the Semites, long-skulled and of medium height; the Mediterraneans, short-skulled, with a short, straight nose; the Libyans, snub-nosed and short-skulled. But the climate and agricultural life have worn away these differences between indigenous and foreign elements and created a specifically Egyptian stock which is no less indivisible than the Nile Valley itself.

174 However all this may be, and although we may not
175 know precisely where the Ancient Egyptians came from, we can be quite sure that the present inhabitants of the country — or at least the fellaheen, and it is with them that we are concerned — are descended from the Egyptians of dynastic times, with whom they are linked without a break and almost without intermixture, despite the passage of fifty centuries and conquest after conquest from abroad.

The conditions of servitude and contempt in which the native 174
population has been held by foreign conquerors since the 175
decline of the Pharaohs have had the effect of preserving the race. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, French and English have in this matter all followed the same policy. They have laid hold on the riches of Egypt, and taken power in order to do so, but have neither associated with nor supplanted the fellaheen who produce the wealth. Egypt has always been too densely populated to be suitable for colonial expansion. The conquerors have never been numerous enough to modify the race of the conquered. Their manner of life has always been different, and contact with them has only aroused antagonism.

There has, however, been some penetration of nomads and negroes from near areas. After the Moslem conquest in the seventh century a number of Arabs settled in Egypt, not only in the towns but also in the countryside. As conquerors they were able to impose on the native inhabitants their language, their religion, some of their customs with regard to women, and their cruelty in vengeance. In spite of this the original inhabitants, a hundred times more numerous, especially in the countryside, with women stronger and more fertile, and a manner of life so persistent and unchanging, have marked the Arab elements with their own stamp. In establishing themselves on the black soil the Arabs adopted the traditions of those who ploughed it. This is still noticeable even today in the villages of the Upper Delta, where on account of the richness of the soil Arab immigration was heavier, and in hamlets recently settled on the edge of the desert. After three or four generations the scion can no longer be distinguished from the stock, or else it has proved too dissimilar to take the graft. Assimilation to type is in fact consequent upon assimilation of the fellah way of life. The Arabs who have remained nomadic, and live by the transport of cotton on camel-back, by pasturing flocks, or by robbery and murder,—those in fact known in Egypt as Bedouin, — differ markedly from the fellaheen by their finer features and their more excitable temperament.

Another fusion has taken place in the south, between 174
fellaheen and negroes. Here, the two elements being more 174
dissimilar, the mixture is more noticeable, but the Egyptian 175

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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F 144 174 175 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

C F 144 779 186 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns, where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F 142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192]

63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171]

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443 186]

68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346]

69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

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72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellahen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

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Chapter Three

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

A STUDY of the village community cannot ignore an analysis of the process of social change and its by-products. Unlike a primitive tribe, the village community is an integral part of a larger whole—the nation. One of the contributions of modern sociology is the distinction between community and state or society as constituting 'distinct categories of integrative forces'. The integrative forces of the community are based on more spontaneous, natural, and direct relations binding people who are of the same kin; whereas society is more artificial, more indirect, and more deliberate in its relations, maintaining its unity and cohesion with more conscious effort. The social heritage of the community is mainly local, tied up with its habitat; thus, usually, community and locality are almost synonymous.[1]

Such distinction has also been made between genuine and spurious culture, or between folk culture and modern civilization. In the analysis of Silwa community and social change, the concept of folk society is to be adopted as a useful one. Robert Redfield has successfully introduced this term to suggest the inclusion of 'peasant and rustic peoples who are not wholly independent of cities'.[2] Hence, it is necessary to project folk life in Silwa, and the processes of social change, against the larger framework of culture change in the Egyptian society.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state has envisaged the modernization of Egypt mainly in terms of Western civilization, the impact of which has been steadily increasing since the French expedition of 1798. It was through the efforts of the French scholars and Napoleon's reforms that Egypt started to interest itself in Western civilization. The Western way of life was greatly admired by Mohammad Ali, who ascended to power in 1805, and whose ambitious plans to build up a modern state led him to imitate Europe as widely as possible.

[1] This distinction is based on S. F. Nadel's article on 'Nupe State and Community', in *Africa*, Vol. VIII, 1935.

[2] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, footnote, p. 293.

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Ever since then, certain aspects of European civilization have been influencing the Egyptian folk life to varying degrees. However, the Westernization of Egypt, with its differential rate mainly between urban and rural districts, could be summarized in the increasing industrialization, in the spread of schools, in the establishment of a parliamentary system with its concomitant political parties, in the awakening of national feeling, in the expansion of medical facilities and the decline of folk medicine, in the growth of an intellectual middle class and a working class, and in the expanding of the press and other means of communication. Upon the degree of the penetration of such social forces depend the transformations that the folk structure have undergone.[1]

The phrase 'modernization' and not 'Westernization' of Egypt is in fact a happier term, which is more acceptable to the Egyptians. The educated Egyptians take a special pride in the approximation of their country's institutions and reforms to those of the West, together with an emphasis on their national colouring. Some of them have a romantic way of exalting the glories of the past mixed with various aspirations towards religious revival.

The impact of Western civilization on Egypt could be described as the two responses designated by Toynbee as 'Zealotism' and 'Herodianism'. The former response describes a state of mind and a pattern of behaviour which adheres to the traditional way of life with great scrupulousness and rigidity in the face of the pressures of the Western challenge. The Zealot's behaviour is essentially irrational and instinctive; he says in his heart that he will go thus far and no further. Herodianism is the other response based on the principle that the most effective way to guard against the danger of the new challenge is to master its secrets and to learn to fight the enemy with his own weapons and tactics.[2]

The 'ulema of al-Azhar, particularly during the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century, have been amongst the strongest opponents of Western life and the general trends of secularization. The attitude of the 'ulema in the nineteenth century towards the Western civilization is revealed in a conversation between Michaud, a French traveller who came to Egypt during the reign of Mohammad Ali, and the Mufti of al-Mansourah. The latter maintained that although Europeans accuse Easterners of rigidity and lack of purpose, they themselves do not know where and when to stop. Therefore, they always exceed their limits, and to the Mufti, going beyond the limit is worse than not being able to reach it. The result of European civilization, he believed, was chaos and dissatisfaction. He likened it to a fermenting drink which breaks the vessel that holds it.[3]

[1] For a study of the impact of Western civilization on Egyptian life a generation ago, see Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East*, London, 1932; and *Western Civilization in the Near East*, London, 1936.

[2] Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, pp. 192–4.

[3] S. Ghorbal, *Mohammad Ali al-Kabir*, p. 76.

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The attitude of the 'ulema and the interpretation of Islam in a narrow-minded way have led some of the progressive 'ulema to a new way of thinking for the rejuvenation of the Moslem way of life. This need was voiced by al-Sayyid Jamal-al-Din Al-Afghani and Mohammad Abduh, whose ideas met with opposition from the 'ulema of their day. Al-Afghani, on his visit to Cairo in 1871, urged the need for adapting Islam to modern conditions and of instituting radical educational reforms in al-Azhar. He believed that Moslem countries should work for their freedom from foreign domination and reformulate their religion which, he thought, by reason of its inner spiritual force could be reinterpreted to suit the demands of modern life.[1] Mohammad Abduh, like his teacher al-Afghani, was a vigorous critic of the narrow content and method of teaching in al-Azhar. He advocated the broadening of the basis of learning by studying not only the works of classical Arabic and theology for the defence of the Faith, but by studying also the modern sciences, history, and comparative religion to catch up with Western progress.[2]

However, secularization of life in Egypt and divorce from religious principles and justifications have rarely been more than skin deep. In the constitution of the country, Islam is the religion of the state. Moreover, Islamic forces have always provided the basic guidance in life for individual as well as for corporate life.

Indications of a religious revival are witnessed in movements like that of the Moslem Brotherhood and in the considerable flow of literature dealing with the life of the Prophet, the Companions, and the four Caliphs, written by eminent authors. Indeed, many of the Arab thinkers assert that without the inspiration and guidance of Islam, the future holds barren prospects for the Moslem world whose spiritual and intellectual greatness depends essentially upon its faith. They also claim that a purification of Islam is also necessary to rid it of the superstitions which have led to the backwardness of the masses. This purification, combined with subsequent intensification of Islamic principles, can alone enable religion to become as creative a force as it once used to be.[3]

E [175]

One of the main forces that is inextricably connected with the process of social change since the beginning of the twentieth century is the emergence of the middle class in Egypt. Hitherto, Egypt's economic and political structure was dominated by a class of warriors similar to the medieval knights in Europe. The dynasties of the Ayyubides (A.D. 1171–1250) and the Mamelukes (A.D. 1250–1517) relied almost entirely on a class of warriors in both their internal and external policies. This class received its crushing blow from Mohammad Ali in 1811, and this paved the way for the great landowners to wield social and political power. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the middle class of government

[1] Charles Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, p. 15.
[2] H. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 39.
[3] A. J. Arberry and Rom Landau (ed.), *Islam Today*, pp. 14–16.

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177 officials, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and those engaged in commerce, has begun to exert an increasing influence on Egyptian life. This class sees itself not only standing against external political pressure, but also against big landowners, thus championing the feelings and aspirations of the whole nation.

Another important factor in Egyptian society is the relatively recent feeling of nationhood and state sovereignty. Since the Arab conquest of Egypt in A.D. 642, the country has been a part of the Moslem world. In Islam, political and religious matters are indivisible, and their conduct is vested in the ruler who is the instrument of both canon and civil law. But to say that Islam does not distinguish social life and civic status from religious principles of the Faith does not mean that it has established a new pattern of life in the Near East. The religious foundation of society were existent in the ancient Egyptian times, when the Pharaoh was the supreme ruler as well as the representative of the gods on earth.

The Ottoman Empire, however, witnessed in its latter days the gradual moving away from Islamic theocracy. With this, the religious colouring of the Caliphate gradually paled until that institution was eventually abolished in modern Turkey in 1924. The breakdown of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War left the way open for the rise of Arab nationalism in the modern sense of the word.

It has been the deliberate policy of the Egyptian rulers, since the days of Mohammad Ali, to modernize Egypt. More often than not, the pursuit of such a policy has led to aping of Western institutions, regardless of the different social, economic and political background. It is one of the recent contributions of sociology that 'the end products of culture fusion resemble a chemical rather than a mechanical mixture. The resulting culture will not be a simple aggregation of elements, all of which can be traced to one or the other of the parent cultures, but a new thing many of whose patterns cannot be directly referred to either.' In the light of such a remark one is not surprised to find that many Western institutions have not yielded the results intended and expected from them in Egyptian society. An interesting line of research would be to compare the products of the Egyptian parliamentary system, Europeanized system of schools, co-education, industrialization, and so forth, with similar institutions and processes in the West. A critical evaluation and adaptation of borrowings must be always faced; and importations of institutions can only be justified in so far as they could be digested and assimilated by local conditions.

It is appropriate here to mention that, in spite of the political and social vicissitudes that have overtaken Egyptian society, the folk-life has mainly held its own within, and even sometimes against, the trends in the larger society. Various political struggles have occurred throughout the history of Egypt, but the common people, tied down to their land, submitted to any social order enforced upon them. They rarely took part in any resistance and left the battles to the military and ruling classes. To them a

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military defeat meant the ousting of one ruling power by another.[1] Although it is these rulers who have engaged the main interest of historians, it is the habits and traditions of the common folk that have, in fact, been the ultimate forces determining the general run of Egyptian life. What Gruening wrote of Mexico, quoted by Redfield, is equally applicable to the situation in Egypt. 'In few countries is political history less significant than in Mexico, yet its historiographies are pre-eminently political.' Redfield continues: 'The formal institutions, the explicit statement of programme or policy, the bulk of contemporary documents, lie remote from the ways of the masses and record their history almost not at all. The world of the cultivated classes who alone are articulate and alone communicate freely with us, is a world apart from that of the folk.'[2]

Only to a very small extent has Silwa been affected by the forces mentioned earlier. It still preserves its folk culture as the basis of its community life. The village is a homogeneous community in the threefold implication of the term. It is homogeneous to the extent that the villagers belong, or at least consider themselves to belong, to one blood group, engaging in the same kind of work, and, moreover, characterized by slow rate of social change.[3]

The question of social change exists, however, in terms of 'setting and background', and not by itself. 'This is why a discussion of change in culture has meaning only as part of the problem of cultural stability. Both terms are relative and dependent on one another.'[4]

In the process of social change examined in Yucatan, Redfield maintains that the life of primitive peoples can be contrasted with the way of life characterizing civilization in modern urban centres. He maintains that the change is one from a relatively immobile, homogeneous society in which relationships are personal, controls familial, sanctions sacred, with a well-integrated culture, to one tending to have opposite characteristics. In short, organization, individualization, and secularization are causally interrelated with isolation, integration, and homogeneity. In Yucatan, the

[1] Gibb and Bowen say that during the Ottoman rule of the Arab Provinces, and even before that, governors and governed had little effect on each other. 'The explanation is to be found in the very lack of a complex, all-embracing political organization. . . . We may visualize Moslem society as composed of two co-existing groups, the relations between which were for the most part formal and superficial. One group formed the governing class of soldiers and officials, the other the governed class of merchants, artisans and cultivators. Each was organized internally on independent lines and neither group interfered with the organization of the other in normal circumstances.' *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 209.

[2] Quoted by R. Redfield, *Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village*, p. 1: 'In Egypt at present, the new social order is deliberately attempting to bridge the gap between these two social strata. Many of the new legislations aim at minimizing disparities between citizens and at providing equal opportunities for all.'

[3] See Margaret Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory', in *Social Structure*, p. 21.

[4] Melville J. Herskovits, 'The Processes of Cultural Change', in *Science of Man*, p. 144.

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121 community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

177 In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated [101] community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the [205] sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express [296] trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages [443] and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that 571 makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their [829] origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by [77] the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.

[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.

[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

1:Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [787]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 759 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 687 648

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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son. 641 171

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1] 641 [144] 655 641 [558] [119] [453] [456] [426]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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properly. These things are necessary for the game: a palm-tree branch (used as a cane), a ring of rope and a very small stick. The player cannot participate in the benefits of the game until he scores a one and the person is thus 'sweetened'. Further scores are: six for a 'Sultan' who holds the ring of rope, four for a 'Minister' (vizir) who holds the cane, and three ones for the small stick.[1] Directly a Sultan and a Minister are scored, the former can command the latter to beat any 'unsweetened' boy with the cane (usually from one to ten strikes on the soles of the feet). The small stick, when it is scored, is the 'stick of mercy' and the holder can lessen any of the Sultan's penalties. As the game continues, the different symbols of command, execution and mercy change hands according to the tab scorings and thus give ample chance for retaliation, conspiracy and altercation.

17. The third game in which scoring is by 'tab' is called 'Burial' (Dafn). It is a simple game for which the participants sit in a circle. Whoever first scores three ones—sometimes the rule is consecutively, at other times cumulatively—buries the tab sticks in the ground. The player who preceded the winner must then attempt to get the sticks out by using his chin to remove the soil and his teeth to extract the sticks. This takes place amidst the jeers and words of humiliation from the whole of the group.

18. Another type of Seega is played without 'tab' scoring, where a square of five rows of five holes (Khimasiyah), or seven rows of seven holes (Sibaiyah) is made on the ground. Each player, in the case of 'Khimasiyah', has twelve 'dogs', each dozen of different material—crockery bits, stone or dried pellets of camel-dung. The players agree on who shall 'throw' first. The first player puts two of his pieces in any two of the holes except the centre hole into which no piece may be put at this stage. The other player follows by putting two of his pieces where he will. In this way both players place their pieces in all the twenty-four holes, and the centre hole is left for the first move, which is played by the last person who placed his pieces. He moves any one of his pieces adjacent to the centre hole, into the centre hole, and his opponent follows by moving any of his pieces adjacent to the vacated hole, into it. The aim is to get pieces in holes immediately adjacent either side of the opponent's piece, whereupon the surrounded piece is 'eaten' and thrown out of play. The winner is the one who is left with three pieces to the opponent's one.

For example, if player 'A' move his (o) dog to the centre hole (as indicated by the lined arrow) he would be able to 'eat' the 1 and 2 (x)s. Player 'B' would then move his dog to the vacated hole (as shown by the dotted arrow) and could eat 3, 4 and 5 (o)s, as he is allowed to return to his former position if he could 'eat' by such a move.

One of the significant features about 'Seega' is that, though it is an individual game, it is usually, whether played by boys or adults, an attraction for a gathering, everybody giving his advice as to the best move. This

[177]

[1] A residue of the Ottoman rule in Egypt seems to reflect itself in this game.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

872 villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

[MM 291] A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

212 After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·6	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product	*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat ..	6	24
1 ardab of barley ..	3	3
1 ardab of beans ..	6	6
		£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PREFACE

peasants have welcomed me into their lives has enabled me to get into much closer touch with them than is possible for the ordinary foreigner. I can truly say that the kindness generally that I have received has made the years which I have spent in Egypt the happiest in my life. My desire is that I may be able to continue my work and leave behind me a true record of the many interesting and ancient customs of that most attractive country.

To my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, I am indebted for all the ancient analogies. Not only so, but he has devoted hours to the careful perusal of my manuscript, and moreover has seen this book through the press and made all the indexes, thus enabling me to carry on uninterruptedly my researches in Egypt. If, therefore, the book achieves any success I feel that much of that success will be due to him.

To the Councils of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Folklore Society, to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, to the publishers of *Discovery* (Messrs Benn), and to the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Evening News* I am indebted for permission to include in this book articles of mine that have already appeared in their various journals and papers.

To Professor J. L. Myres I must here express my sincere thanks for reading through all the proofs in collaboration with my brother; and to Mr E. S. Thomas, late of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and now Assistant in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thanks are due for supplying me with better translations of the Arabic charms, etc., than I had before.

All the photographs, I should state, have been taken by myself, with the exception of a few which were taken in 1920 by my friend Mr D. J. V. Forster, of Pembroke College, Oxford, at my request, on the occasions when he was present with me at the ceremonies which they illustrate.

I have purposely suppressed the names of people and villages in nearly every instance as I do not think it would be either desirable or fair (see p. 231) to publish them in a semi-popular book of this kind.

Finally, I should like to point out that with the spread of education the old customs and beliefs are already beginning to die out. It is thus most important that they should be recorded at once, before they suffer complete extinction. I hope, therefore, that my work

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

175 Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect
177 the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of
144 the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large
531 numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of
them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

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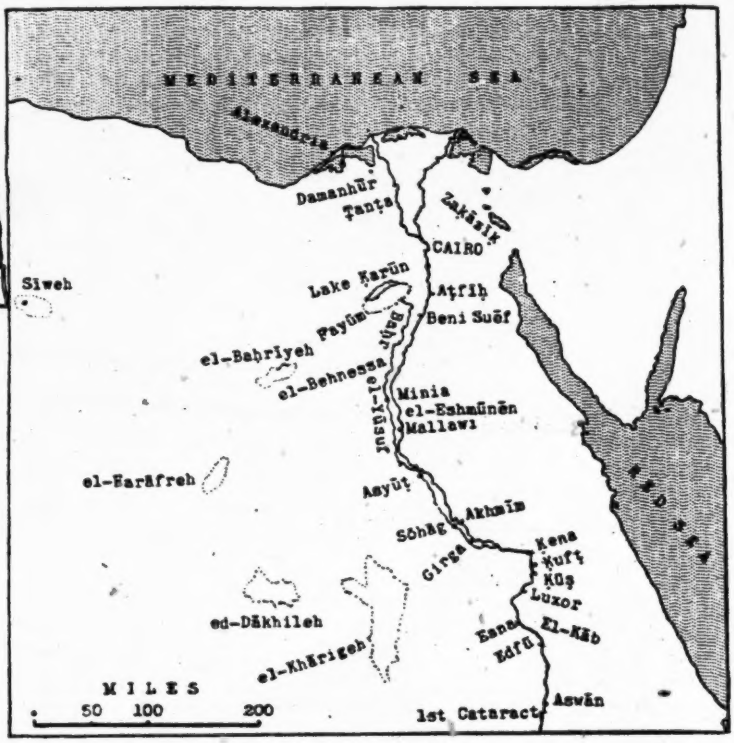

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

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[103]

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

000 The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 884 755 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders 755 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have 854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing 164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en- [144] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer- [784] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great [515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which 743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally 758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their ●177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, 164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [076]

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, F C 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

FIG. 59. CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312
from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [598]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [665]

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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

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776 ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven [346] from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, [177] the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

[349] [137]

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [373] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
sîga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([41]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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point to the Italian word Bilancia[1]. In this way could we seek the origin of the term « Bazha » (the base of the plough) to such origins? In addition to these foreign terms there are arabic names, e. g., « Silah » blade or share, « Riesh » — feathers, « Romh » spear, while the words « Antot » and « Naf » may belong to the Coptic or ultimately to the Egyptian languages. In this way we may see that the Delta, though homogeneous, reveal three segmented linguistic and cultural layers: the Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, and the Arabic. This conclusion, supported by historical records, has its reasoning in the geographical situation of the Delta as the northern limits of the Egyptian Nile Valley, as the area facing the Mediterranean, and lastly as the area exposed to Arabia. 197 184 407*

If the Delta is established as one region, we can further divide it in two sub-regions. Leaning on the arguments stated above, the Eastern Delta would stand alone as a sub-region, while the other parts of the Delta would constitute the second sub-region. There is no part of the Delta other than its East which received so many human and cultural elements from the Middle-East and Arabia and it happens that that part, in what concerns the plough, is remarkably different in terminology and technique. This area, where type II is at home, did not only account for the several offshoots of plough forms (types III, VI ,VII) but also affected the manner in which the ploughman controls his plough. All over the Delta and Middle Egypt the ploughman marches beside his plough where a split handle or a double handle is used. This, as Winkler rightly pointed out[2] is due to the influence of plough Type II, where the ploughman always walk to the left of the plough. In the same source, Winkler claims that this habit of going beside the plough in itself is an evidence of the prior spread of plough II all over the Delta and Middle Egypt[3]. But we must not build a whole theory upon one factor. It is true, as we shall see below, that a curved beamed plough was discovered in Fayum dating to the Roman Period, but this plough was not single 407* 184 [177] [241]

(1) Winkler, H. A., 1936, p. 162.
(2) Winkler, 1936, pp. 148, 150.
(3) Winkler, 1936, pp. 150, 163.

/87 cont'd/ 755

the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief 776
of the Abyssinians (15). 171

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents 755
of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the 776
word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general 177
term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies per- [171]
formed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", especially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia. [171]

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and 776
in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, [171]
mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God

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(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217

(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257

(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [534]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [196] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by an African tribe. In other words, this article could
have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list
of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

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Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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*407 184 handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the ploughand all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

197 184 *407 *Region Two :* Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e. g.. « Wish » and « Wegh » or « Wijh » — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien » or « Gafaien » (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish » for the base, « Sikka » for the share, « Gabaien » for the handles, « Gasaba » for the beam, « Koraga » for the beam extension, and « Karab » for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences [117] from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Baharif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (c) of fig. 1 and map (c) of fig. 2. On map (c) fig. 1 we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Madd [114] is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities—

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Kelh and Benban were given this terminology by Winkler[1]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennasr, Abu Ibny, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramadi South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of « Wegh » and « Wijh », for the base, « 'Amud » instead of « Miftah » for the pin, and « Mindef » instead of « Weiar » or « Baruf » for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North.

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[114]

Region Three : Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area : a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide it to three sub-regions : Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity : the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolised in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have « Higr » for beam, « Bagrom » for pin, « Saffit » for the beam extension, « Shaddab » for the cross peg of the beam extension, and « Danad » for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins. [177]

[1] Winkler, 1936, p. 153.

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either in the Fayum Coptic or with a mixture of Greek origins, for we know that Fayum was once one of the important centers of the Greek Ptolomies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH

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It is a well established fact that the first recorded form of plough is found on the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Many drawings from the Old and the New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt can give us a picture relevant to question of the evolution of the plough. There is also a coloured wooden figure of the plough which belong to the 11th or the 12th dynasty kept in the British Museum, and many original ploughs were found near Fayum which belong to the Greek and Roman periods of the history of Egypt, and which are kept in the different Museums of the world, e. g. Cairo and Berlin. All these examples of the plough covering a very long time span can be used as a sound basis for the study of the history of the present Egyptian plough, if we add to it the description of the plough in the 18th century A. D., recorded by Norden[1], and by the scientists of the French Expedition to Egypt[2].

In an unpublished report in the Agricultural Museum of Cairo, a short note is written on the subject of the ancient Egyptian plough. Extracts from the note runs as follows :

> « The ancient Egyptian traditions alledge that the Egyptians are indebted to Osiris, God of Plants in the Egyptian Panthaeon, for the knowledge of the plough. Evidences from early drawings proove that the plough in its original form was worked only by man, and it was only drawn by oxen in the drawings of Meidum, i.e., begining from the third Dynasty. In that form the plough had only one wooden share for ploughing the soft soils ; and had a double wooden share covered by a sheet of bronze to plough harder soils.... The plough was called in the Egyptian language SIKKA. »

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(1) See references under Norden.
(2) See references under Girard.

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We have no doubt that the single handled curved beamed plough belong to the Mediterranean cultural region, and because Egypt, though lying on the coasts of the Mediterranean, represent in its greater part a somewhat isolated area (especially Upper Egypt), it has evolved its plough type according to its needs. Furthermore Egypt in nearly all its Dynastic history was an independent state, and perhaps that helped towards keeping traditional impliments. When the Greek family of the Ptolomies consolidated its rule in Alexandria, Egypt was open now to the influences of the Greek-Mediterranean culture. This still attained its zenith during the Roman occupation of Egypt. From the Roman period onwards Egypt was part and parcel of successive macrocosmos, namely the Roman Empire, the Arabic Empire, and the Turkish Empire. We are sure that so much influences played its part in the development of the Egyptian plough, but these influences did not overcome the two handled plough, which resisted these encroushments and succeeded to remain nearly intact in southern Upper Egypt, and co-existed with the mediterranean single handled plough in the Delta, intact in its isolated pocket in the Prarues of Lake Manzala, and in the northern parts of Upper Egypt. It is only in most parts of the Delta which was incessantly under the influence of the Mediterranean, that a compromise between the Egyptian double handle-straight beamed plough and the Mediterranean single curved-straight beamed type, took place in the plough types I and III, i. e., the split handle-straight beamed type, and the single handle-straight beamed type. The characteristics of plough type I gives us every reason to conclude that it leans heavily on the principle of the Egyptian double handled plough, the only compromise is that the handles are united in the upper part, but the projection of the handles was kept to a certain degree, together with the straight beam. Type III inclines more to the Mediterranean plough in keeping the single handle, but the compromise took place in the change of the curved beam to a straight beam.

One can now safely conclude that the evolution of the Egyptian plough took the following periods and events :

1. Throughout Dynastic Egypt the double handled-straight beamed plough persisted all over Egypt. This plough deserve the appellation

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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of the Egyptian plough due to its archaic age. In its relatively purest form it survive in plough type V. 174 177 407

2. Begining of the Greco-Roman period the Mediterranean plough extended over many parts of the Delta, and the northern part of Upper Egypt including Fayum. But we are certain that it did not exist in its pure form, at least in Fayum, and was adjusted to the double handle principle. In its pure form it persist now in Eastern Delta. This fact may be explained by the everlasting stream of Arab settlers in this part of the Delta—being geographically exposed to Arabia. Plate 8 show us that the Arabs of Palastine, and those of Hadramut use the Mediterranean plough. The same plough is used in the Oasis of Siwa, the coast West of Alexandria, and in Libya and North-west Africa. It is only Western and Central Delta which break through this continuous distribution of the Mediterranean plough. One can conclude that this plough type did not reign over the Delta as a whole, even in the Greco-Roman period. We must not imagine that as soon as it came to Egypt, it expelled the older double handled plough. We should also bear in mind that neither the Greek nor the Romans ploughed the land themselves, but formed a governing aristocracy in Egypt. It is highly probable that this plough type gained sure footing after the Arabic settlement in the Eastern Delta. This is due to the fact that the Arabs settled down and cultivated the land themselves somewhere around the 10th century. Bearing this in mind however, does not negate the pre-Arab existance of this plough in different parts of the Delta. [171]

3. Plough type IV, which retains most of the characteristics of the type V, was affected but slightly by the Mediterranean plough. This may be prooved by the fact that the handles does not retreat or project rearwards, but are fixed at nearly right angles to the base. This is a special characteristic of the single handle of the Mediterranean plough.

4. Plough type I has been already mentioned.

5. Plough type III, has been also mentioned, but we may add that this type probably represent the newest adaptation of plough types in Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

56.

Self Importance.

539x 578

Addressed to a wretched, dirty fellow who is something of a braggart. He looks like a smutty, black baking-tin, but acts as if he were of great importance.

Alla ʿaṣ-ṣāg el-hindi,
fellaḥ we-ʿāmilê gindi!

Allah! look at the fine baking-tin!
Only a peasant and would play the soldier!

1. Literally: "Indian baking-tin" The adjective "(East) Indian" is used frequently with stuffs as an equivalent for "excellent". [177] [192]

2. One must not have in mind the tame, modern Egyptian military, but rather the Turkish soldiers of former times. Compare No. 55.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MRI3
Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521

In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[117] [436]

3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264]

4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

117.

Light Minded.

×539

Ummāli ē? ummāli ē?
āḫod el-fellāḥ: aʿmil-bo ē?
āḫod el-gindi
abu šāl hindi.
5 *Hāwa yeṛanni*
wanarudd ʿalê.

Of course, what else? Of course, what else?
If I take the peasant, what shall I do with him?
I will take the soldier
With the Indian shawl.
5 He shall sing
And I shall answer him.

118.

Dost Thou Think of Me?

Yasmar, yabu ʿēn ʿasalīye,
garḥê hawāk itmakkan fīye.
Yasmar, yabu-l-libās eṣ-ṣīni,
ana ʿala bālak wala-nte nāsîni.

Thou brown one, with the honey-brown eyes,
The wound of thy love is fast fixed in me.
[291] Thou brown one with the dainty drawers,
Dost thou remember me, or hast thou forgotten me?

[263] 1. Egyptian honey is much darker than ours.
[177] 3. Literally: "Chinese under drawers". Chinese is used here as Indian is in Nos. 56 and 117.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 258 [609] [477] An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 [286] [299] [291] Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 178 [609] From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [592] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 687 648

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of 622 his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility 642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, [625] with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[559] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of 642 the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[504] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[432] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[261] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.
[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son. 641 179

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1] 641 [144] 655 641 [558] [119] [453] [456] [426]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

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Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions. 178 574 [431] [556]

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies. 178 554

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'. 178 369

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business. 178 [626]

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1] 369 [828]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 182 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people 178 of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied [426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the [369] material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force [182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress* (*Chan Kom Revisited*), p. 66.

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [178] [847]

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

852 304 [1949]

The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

852 431

Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

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In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living. [841] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

[524] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary [369] games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous' [525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.

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585 606 might have been the relations between him and them before marriage, the newly created situation makes him no longer on familiar social terms with them. Traditionally, to remove this 'avoidance' the bridegroom's family should send within the first two months of marriage a ram to the bride's family as a 'reconciliation'.[1]

This avoidance could be regarded as a recognition that, in the initial stages of marriage, much of the behaviour of the married man to the family of his spouse has to be modified and reoriented. Even if he is married to his cousin, avoidance of her parents is required as a token of respect. Adoption of new phrases in reference to his in-laws, house habits of reserve, announcing his entrance into the house, manner of dress and similar items of etiquette must be observed by the newly married groom. In other words, previous informality and intimacy are replaced by a degree of formality to show consideration for the new ties of marriage.

This avoidance could also be considered as a manifestation that the [591] husband, living in his matrilocal residence, feels uneasy and embarrassed in the home of a comparatively alien family; his ultimate home will be his patrilineal house to which he eventually takes his wife.[2] This custom also implies the psychological stresses involved in the new situation, where it is difficult to render the demands of consanguinity and affinity compatible, and where the support of the larger family unit has to be sustained for the maintenance of the newly created bonds of the individual family.[3]

Nadel explains such an avoidance in a similar manner. He maintains that in such a situation spontaneous shame and conventionalized sexual shame appear combined; for these cultural features express (and prevent) both the embarrassment between strangers (in a kinship sense) who are thrown together by marriage, and the embarrassment that springs from the awareness of the sexual occasion responsible for this new relationship.[4]

Such social procedures are implicit cultural solutions for smoothing transition from one state of life to another requiring concomitant adjustment and reorganization.

[1] Although avoidance between bridegroom and parents-in-law is still strictly observed, the breaking away from it does not necessarily have to be achieved through a gift of a 'slaughter', but occurs quite often nowadays through the exigencies of everyday life after the lapse of some time. [108]

[2] This is the ideal course to be taken, but, as mentioned earlier, other factors, e.g. lack of space in his father's house, the bride's parents' attachment to their daughter and her children, might keep the husband in his matrilocal residence for years.

[3] This explanation is based on a similar situation referred to by R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 343. This avoidance lends itself to psycho-analytical interpretation in terms of incestuous taboo. The uneasiness in the newly created situation could also be inferred from the 'mock fight' which could be classified, according to Van Gennep, as one of the 'rites de separation', while exchange of gifts and the partaking of food would fall in the category of 'rites d'agrégation'. Cf. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, p. 198.

[4] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 352. The psycho-analytical interpretation for such a taboo, according to Roheim, is that in this way an attempt is made to separate the wife from the mother, genitality from orality, and infantile dependency. *Psycho-analysis and Anthropology*, p. 423.

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182 evaluate such institutions purely from the point of view of their immediate economic rationality and not as means of 'mutual adjustment of purposes in a total situation'. In such above-mentioned occasions, one can hardly fail to note the social values connected with prestige and the elements of reciprocity embodied in these forms of celebrations. Moreover, one cannot ignore the validity of their educative and cohesive functions. Since reciprocity is one of the major stabilizing forces in this community, its importance requires 'spinning out', since 'a solitary presentation of the principle would be ineffective'.[1] The economic method of interpreting social phenomena is one devised by particular workers as a means of considering such phenomena in the light of their particular field, and cannot be accepted as the whole or the sole explanation. The rationality of ceremonies and the functionalism of the extended family must be interpreted in the light of the community's social ends. In this connection, Firth remarks that '. . . economic activity is subordinate to social ends. It is only by studying those ends that one can see how particular economic systems work'.[2] It was pointed out how social and religious values render dealing in usury, or acceptance of compensation, repulsive to the moral code of this community. On the other hand, social prestige and rivalry
[578] combined with a weak ego-structure would explain why law-suits about land or other quarrels can be pursued with seemingly endless effort and expense, to the extent that such procedures might cost both sides more than the market value of the object under dispute.

Failure to assess social facts in their total cultural perspective has often
178 militated against the best intentions of reformers. Compulsory education
182 in terms of abolishing illiteracy has yielded negligible results, as shown earlier, even compared with the expenditure allocated to it. It has been related to neither the cultural needs nor the technical skills required in rural communities. Campaigns against infectious diseases must take into account the fact that, to the villagers, fear of contagion is subordinate to the rendering of reciprocal social obligation connected with sickness. The preference for reserving and offering the 'best food' to guests or strangers rather than be eaten by the members of the family for its 'nutritional value' must be viewed and understood first in terms of 'the people's values' concerning hospitality and generosity.

The adherence to traditional customs, beliefs, ways of thinking and
178 living is the basis of the peasants' psychological security. That peasants
[156] rigidly adhere to their traditions and do not listen to 'reason' as explained to them by scientists or government officials has its root cause in this

[1] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 400. It is worth noting that in this community, as well as in many other parts of Egypt, the standardised social comments are legion as are also the respective responses in occasions of work, eating, drinking, building a house, after having a haircut, after toilet, on wearing new clothes, after having a
[576] bath, and on many other occasions for which good manners necessitate a particular expression or ejaculation and responding to it in a particular way.

[2] R. Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, p. 153.

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psychological factor. Professor Read has commented on scientists trained in the fields of agriculture, medicine, or economics, and brought up with great faith in anything labelled scientific, who do not easily realize that the peasant has a sense of security in his very insecurity. She further maintains 'that insecurity is the thing he knows, and he understands it in so far as he has always lived with it and adjusted his practices and his ideas in relation to it'.[1]

These remarks about some of the traditional ways of life in the village are only explanations of certain social facts and imply no value judgment. As Nadel maintains, the social enquirer at some stage in his analysis inevitably turns into a social philosopher and 'must posit absolute aims or purposes, and some self-reliant worthwhileness of actions, since without these assumptions his subject matter simply makes no sense'.[2] We believe that change there can be, and ought to be. But as we have been mainly concerned in this thesis with the analytical and explanatory and not the evaluative categories of enquiry, there is no point in dwelling on the latter here.

This study provokes also a comment concerning the generalization made about the nature of the face-to-face relations in a simple society and the value concepts attached to them. Some sociologists have maintained that, because of the integration of such societies, personal relations are smooth and intimate, and perhaps attractive, contrasted with the discontents of civilization and its disorganizing forces.[3] This seems to be another type of generalization similar to that refuted by anthropologists with regard to the groupistic and individualistic nature of behaviour amongst primitive and peasant societies.

In spite of his emphasis on the group behaviour of the Arab fellaheen, and on the importance of appealing to the whole community, Tannous also mentions incidents of rivalry, conflict, and competition among them.[4] In this study we have noted how the constituent social units of this community give rise to tendencies of conflict and rivalry. It has been shown how the susceptibility to friction in this community's culture finds in the early stimulation of sibling rivalry one of its supporting forces. Both solidarity and friction are cultural expectations among siblings, and this reflects itself in the village structure as well as in its structural relations with the rest of the G'afra villages. It seems that the equilibrium of the community is maintained through an elaborate system of social behaviour

[1] Margaret Read, 'Common Grounds in Community Development Experiments', in *Community Development Bulletin*, Vol. II, June 1951.

[2] S. F. Nadel, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[3] See Kimball Young, *Social Psychology*, in his distinction between the characteristics of primary and secondary groups. This is also evident in some of Redfield's writings. See also Lewis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*, London, 1934.

[4] Afif I. Tannous, 'Extension Work among the Arab Fellahin', in *Farmers of the World*, ed. by Edmund de S. Brunner, Irwin T. Sanders and Douglas Ensminger, New York, 1947 ed., pp. 78–100.

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as other anthropologists, have viewed the efficacy of modern education in schools, and the problems that face the adolescent in the modern complex society. They have pointed out the gaps in modern education in the transmission of the cultural heritage, especially at the stage of adolescence, when transition from childhood dependence to adult independence is expected to take place.[1]

As far as Silwa is concerned, it has been shown how the child-training practices impress on the growing individual the social norms with certain dominant themes at different stages. It has also been noted that the child-training system reflects many of the social and psychological attitudes of adult behaviour. Attempts have been made throughout this work to discern some correlations between adult values and personality structure, and techniques of instilling children with 'adab'. Children begin to adopt some of the cultural values of the community even during childhood, e.g. assertive, aggressive, and rivalry attitudes towards other children, while there is submissive and obedient behaviour towards elders; observance of sex regulations and behaviour before puberty; the earlier attainment by girls of sociological maturity, and so on. It was also pointed out from observations, tests, dreams and Rorschach responses, that the children's flights of imagination are curbed at an early stage, thus making the children show striking interest in adult activities of farming, ceremonial celebrations, and kinship relations. The policy of child-training in Silwa sets the pattern of the social relations of individuals in their groupings, and incorporates them as well in the productive activities of the community.

Against such a background of the cultural tradition, one can draw certain conclusions. One can see the contributions that an educational institution may make in the social and economic life of a community. One can ascertain the difficulties encountered in its proper functioning. Furthermore, one can view in proper perspective the complex process which children undergo in adjusting themselves to school curriculum and its values on one hand and to the prevailing conditions of home training on the other.

Many educational thinkers have emphasized the importance of relating the school to the needs of the community. In this connection it is often assumed that elements in the educational content of a community could be transferred easily with benefit to the school curricula, providing stimulation, and provoking the interest of the learners. Such assumptions often ignore the new situation which has arisen out of the cultural contacts. Those who are thinking in such ways wishfully hope to recreate the past; but in their zeal they tend to ignore the basis of the community's educative forces.[2] In this community, for example, the inclusion in a reading book of some of the local fairy tales, or the inclusion of some of the children's games in the school, would be considered facetious and undignified by

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea*.
[2] See M. Read, review of Gladwyn M. Childs' book referred to earlier.

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both children and adults. A faith in the practical subjects and in their educative value would be met with reticence in such a community. For such practical skills are considered to be of lower social status than farming; they are judged to be subjects unsuitable for inclusion in the school programme, as their acquisition occurs as a by-product of observation and routine.

Studies of this type based on the functional approach towards the place of the school in its social setting are proving to be valuable guides to educational reconstruction. They also provide a buffer through their pragmatic analysis, against the various winds of educational doctrine which sometimes beat upon educational theory and practice with the force of a gale.

Sociological studies have also contributed to the modification of many generalizations about the social and psychological development of *the* child or *the* adolescent. It is becoming increasingly apparent that no study can make sweeping generalizations about the child or the adolescent, as we have always to ask questions about the conditioning factors, e.g. the home and environmental background; or, in a modern community, the class to which the child belongs. An American sociologist maintains that in American education, 'the ineffectiveness of middle-class sanctions upon the great masses of lower-class children is the crucial dilemma of our thoroughly middle-class teachers and school systems. Thus lower-class children remain "unsocialized" and "unmotivated" from the middle-class point of view.'[1]

If one talks in general terms about the development of children's imagination, the stages when they become capable of responding to authority, or of assuming responsibility, and about the conflicts of personal adjustment, he is denying the conditioning effect of social forces which play a potent part in the quality of the individual's development and in his social adjustment. Adult attitudes and expectations must be taken into consideration. It has been shown in this study how, in Silwa as among the Manus, children are almost completely deprived of imaginative potentialities and are very matter-of-fact at a very early stage. Children do not tinker with adult themes of life in their play as preparation for their future life.

To expect that certain characteristics of child development are absolute, irrespective of the adult world, would be to ignore the strength of the cultural tradition.[2] The study of the 'psychology of child development' must be contingent on that of the 'sociology of child development'.[3] The Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago main-

[1] Allison Davis and Robert Havighurst, 'Social Class and Colour Differences in Child-Rearing', in *Personality in Nature Society and Culture*, p. 263. See also their book, *Father of the Man*, Boston, 1947, pp. 10–11.

[2] M. Mead, *Growing Up*, pp. 267–8.

[3] An interesting example of research in the sociology of child development is a field study of social influence in groups of children by R. Lippitt, N. Polansky and S. Rosen, 'The Dynamics of Power', in *Human Relations*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1952.

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him was that of cousin-uncle, and I used to call him Uncle Mahmoud, 159
which he used to appreciate very much.

Mahmoud is the eldest and head of a family of four brothers and a half-sister, as well as a cousin living together with them. Only one of the four brothers is a full brother of Mahmoud, the other being half-brothers, while the cousin is from the paternal side, and is also the half-brother (uterine) of the other two from their mother.

Mahmoud himself was first married to his cousin, whom he divorced after having a daughter from her. He remarried, but only one daughter has survived from his second wife, and the death of his son at the age of three was due, as he thinks, to the sorcery of his first wife. Two years after the death of his first wife, her daughter was married to Hassan, Mahmoud's cousin: there is one son. One of his brothers is married to a close relative of Mahmoud's wife, and all the brothers at present are married and work together, although recently two of them went to live in new and separate houses. Before the last two brothers married, all of them were working on their land as well as three acres they usually rent. More than ten years ago one of the brothers went off to work in Cairo as a domestic servant, and since then he has never settled in the village, but pays visits occasionally to see his wife and family.

None of the brothers is literate, except the youngest, who had been conscripted into the army and has there learned to read and write as part of the army's literacy campaign for conscripts. After completing his service he volunteered as a lorry driver in the army, where he works now, leaving his wife and a small boy under the guardianship of his brother, Mahmoud.

Returning to Mahmoud himself, he worked as a farmer until the age of thirty, then he became the head of the village police (ghafeer) and this job seems to have given much scope for his pride and energy. He would usually talk about the order he maintained in the village while he was occupying that post, and emphasize the fact that everybody respected and even feared him. He was dismissed from this post after he had struck someone in a fight, and for this offence he was imprisoned for eighteen [683] months.

During his work as head of 'ghafeers', Mahmoud related with great pride that he managed to prevent the women from going to fill their jars from the Nile on account of certain rumours which had spread in the [626] village about their behaviour along the agricultural road, and this temporary action from his side was met with general approval. It also befell him to carry out the wishes of the preacher from the city, to prevent women [178] from following the bier of the deceased as mentioned in the chapter on social change. He added that, after his time, women reverted to their old practice.

Mahmoud goes to town now and again on business, but, apart from such interruptions, he spends most of his time in the village tending to his farm. Three years ago, one of his half-brothers had a disagreement with

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Chapter I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen ([1]), that is to say the country labourers 101
of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, 161
represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, 101
or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has 175
lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, 175
their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. 178
From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of [636]
the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, 181
but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

[651 669]

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (3), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrîzi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

Here lies the heart of the problem. How are we to 178 explain this physical stability, this changelessness both mental and social, this enduring and extraordinary sameness in a people ?

The answer lies in the soil. The uniformity of Egyptian 178 art is to be explained by its assimilation to the natural 121 environment. The level ridges and steep cliffs on the edge of the Arabian and the Libyan deserts have produced the long, low, solid outline of the Pharaonic temples, as well as the regular cornice which finishes them. The papyrus, lotus, or reed which grew along the Nile were stylised in the pillars and capitals which we now call papyriform, lotiform, or proto-Doric.

For ages past an intimate bond, which successive masters of Egypt have used all their powers to draw even tighter, has existed in the Nile Valley, between nature and the human mind.

The fellah stands between the hammer and the anvil, 178 between the soil and the masters of the soil. Yet by the very 121 nature of his life he remains nearer to it than to them; and 181 their hammer-blows beat him yet closer to the ground. This union is so real that the fellah's masters, who are also the owners of the soil, through owning the soil also own the fellah. Thus the fellaheen owe their astonishing uniformity and stability to their close association with an element no less uniform and stable, namely the soil of Egypt. There has grown up between these two a bond which is at once firm and elastic; a balanced and self-sufficient interdependence which no crisis or government can disturb. Here is, in the words of Sully-Prudhomme, "that stern, immemorial wedlock of a land and a people which have made each other". This unbroken contact of people and land has caused a perpetual interplay of action and reaction, of likeness and difference, which strengthens the indissoluble union of the two. On the one hand, we have nature, the physical environment in its broader sense, that is to say the climate and the sunshine and above all the water and loam of the Nile, its flora and its enveloping sands. On the other hand we have man, the social element, that is to say the fellah class, shut in no less by its habits than by its villages; dense, gregarious, but isolated and unorganised, closer to the soil, which it understands, than to the State, of which it knows nothing.

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive.
121

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs of the dead. 245

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them. [585 777]

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years. 777 842

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity. 755 757 278

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater part of her book (44) to describing superstition in its thousand forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter. 183 171 178

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([10]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([11]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. E 873
In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria.
The Government's primary and secondary schools count E
their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed [872]
with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, E [204
reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the 214]
best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not E
more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-* [658]
Fellah, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to E 814
Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo 815
or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national E 812
language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, 814
something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not 641
just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this 178
development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal? E F
Are they following the élite of the cities? The answer is: 369 178 ●
either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is 212
discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelm- E
ing majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise F
it. (") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who 636
developed everything in Egypt except education; with the 181
fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no 871
eagerness to learn; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of F
the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know 212
how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

[651 681 731 661]

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

[453]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an undoubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave. 178 511 735

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements. [171]

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit. 735 185

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" (").

In this low standard of living we must also include moral poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 511 735

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 538 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FOREWORD

largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder.
One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim !

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[172]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[426] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy
[595] is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organised* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 577 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 10

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

because of my real affection for them, and because I very greatly desire to see their lives improved, especially from the moral standpoint, that I venture to speak openly on a subject in which I am much interested—*i.e.*, how to assure a more wholesome childhood and a higher mental training for the girls, so that they may be better and wiser wives and mothers.

I have every cause to speak of these people with affection, for their courtesy to me has been unbounded, and I have often marvelled at their patience and cheerfulness, even in the midst of poverty and great privations, which they bear with a courage that enforces respect. Their kindness to each other in times of trouble is most marked, and they will as a rule, however poor they may be, share their scanty fare with one whose position may be even worse than their own. This nobler side of their character shows what a fine people they might become were the women, the chief influence in any community, to receive a better training in childhood, a more suitable education, and to have held up before them a higher ideal of life.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

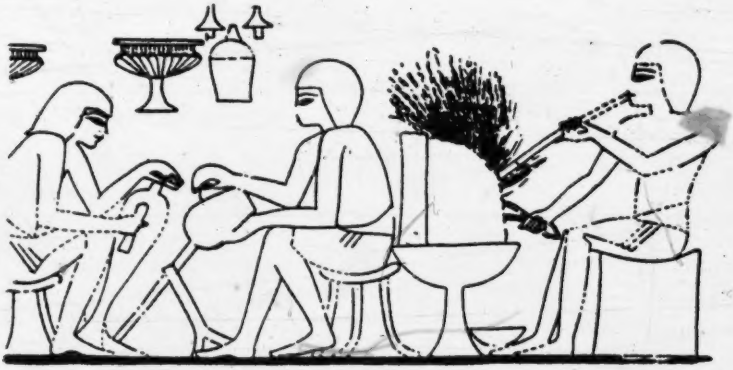

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

Chapter I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers 101
of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, 161
represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, 101
or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has 175
lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, 175
their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. 178
From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of [636]
the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, 181
but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

Here lies the heart of the problem. How are we to 178
explain this physical stability, this changelessness both mental and social, this enduring and extraordinary sameness in a people ?

The answer lies in the soil. The uniformity of Egyptian 178
art is to be explained by its assimilation to the natural 121
environment. The level ridges and steep cliffs on the edge of the Arabian and the Libyan deserts have produced the long, low, solid outline of the Pharaonic temples, as well as the regular cornice which finishes them. The papyrus, lotus, or reed which grew along the Nile were stylised in the pillars and capitals which we now call papyriform, lotiform, or proto-Doric.

For ages past an intimate bond, which successive masters of Egypt have used all their powers to draw even tighter, has existed in the Nile Valley, between nature and the human mind.

The fellah stands between the hammer and the anvil, 178
between the soil and the masters of the soil. Yet by the very 121
nature of his life he remains nearer to it than to them; and 181
their hammer-blows beat him yet closer to the ground. This union is so real that the fellah's masters, who are also the owners of the soil, through owning the soil also own the fellah. Thus the fellaheen owe their astonishing uniformity and stability to their close association with an element no less uniform and stable, namely the soil of Egypt. There has grown up between these two a bond which is at once firm and elastic; a balanced and self-sufficient interdependence which no crisis or government can disturb. Here is, in the words of Sully-Prudhomme, "that stern, immemorial wedlock of a land and a people which have made each other". This unbroken contact of people and land has caused a perpetual interplay of action and reaction, of likeness and difference, which strengthens the indissoluble union of the two. On the one hand, we have nature, the physical environment in its broader sense, that is to say the climate and the sunshine and above all the water and loam of the Nile, its flora and its enveloping sands. On the other hand we have man, the social element, that is to say the fellah class, shut in no less by its habits than by its villages; dense, gregarious, but isolated and unorganised, closer to the soil, which it understands, than to the State, of which it knows nothing.

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive.
121

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

● 181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

'*omda*'s house takes its place. All day long he is receiving 622
petitioners or travellers, unless he is going the rounds with 692
some official or inspecting his own fields. He pays frequent visits to the chief town of the district, either for business or for pleasure.

This uncontrolled system, though it has many advantages 692
for the Government, is full of drawbacks for the fellah, 578
abandoned as he is to a master who knows no more about administration than about justice. There are indeed exceptions, but they are as yet few. The system is also prejudicial to public security. Crimes may easily be concealed, or even foisted upon the innocent, by such an autocracy. Village feuds usually owe their origin and persistence to the rivalries aroused by this office.

At Nahyet el Barûd, in the *markaz* of Abu Tîg, a new 622
'*omda* was to be nominated. Among the candidates for the 666
position two were outstanding, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Zeid and Sheikh Ahmed Farghali. One of these had been dismissed from the post by official action; the other, who had been *omda* in 1931, had also been dismissed by the Nessim Pasha Ministry. Both candidates were much feared in the district, and each had a large band of supporters. The committee which had to count the votes and then decide the election was formed of the *maamûr*, representatives of the neighbouring villages, and the *maazûn* of the village itself. However, the eligibility of the *maazûn*, as being a relative of one of the candidates, was challenged by the other. The authorities of the *markaz* then let it be known that the *maazûn* of another village would sit in his place. But on the day of the election, which was to be decided by a show of hands, it was seen that the first *maazûn* was still on the committee. His enemy's supporters objected, while his own friends upheld him, and the two parties came to blows. Worse than this, they made use of whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and a savage battle ensued. Before the police could intervene, three men had been killed and a number of others seriously wounded. The authorities arrested both candidates. The *mudîr* of Assiut gave orders that elections at Nahyet el Barûd and the neighbouring villages should be suspended until order was re-established (11th July, 1937).

Towards his superiors, whether officials or landlords, the 181
fellah adopts an attitude of awesome respect, of servility

181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *mudwen* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [19].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

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241 It has been calculated that by this method little more
312 than 200 cubic feet of water, or enough for about one acre, can be raised in a day of twelve hours. Such a yield bears no reasonable proportion to the effort exerted, but the instrument is extremely cheap. As long as poverty remains, such methods will continue in use.

This method is called *nattâla*. It was already known to the fellaheen of Ancient Egypt [22] and is used by Japanese peasants, for example on Shikoku.

Second Method

One or two men crouch at the water's edge, turning and turning the crank handle of a wooden cylinder, which reaches from water level to the mouth of the runnel. The water rises spirally inside this cylinder, which is about 18 ins. across. This is the *tambour* or Archimedean screw, a wooden cylinder hooped with iron and about six or nine feet in length, according as it is turned by one or two men. The spiral is fixed between the inside wall and an iron axis, one end of which is bent into a crank, while the other turns on a stake fixed under water.

The *tambour* can irrigate two or three times as much as a *nattâla*, but it costs more and is heavier to work. Moreover, since it requires the continual use of the forearm, it is very much more tiring. Nevertheless it is still much in use, and may frequently be seen.

These two kinds of water-lifting machinery are practicable when the water level is not very low, but sometimes water has to be sought three, six or even thirty feet below the level of the field to be irrigated.

The easiest thing would be to instal a pumping engine. There are many of these on the large estates, but none on small properties; for as the fellaheen are numerous and
[181 conservative, poor in money and rich in time, this "con-
183] venience" does not commend itself to them. They solved the watering problem ages ago in a way which matches their means, and they feel no need to desert their present system for one which may possibly be better, but which is as yet new and untried.

To raise water from a depth of more than three feet the fellah uses a method as primitive as it is simple. He plants

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

511 why the balance of the fellah's budget is so easily upset,
434 and that is why he is so often swamped by debts and interest.

454 If in any given year, by a stroke of good fortune, none
181 of these extraordinary expenses befall him, the fellah, hoarding piastre after piastre in a pot hidden in the earth, can at last see his dream come true, and buy a *gamoossa* or a few *kirats* of land. It is this alluring possibility, always just round the corner, which makes him continue year after year, like the soil and with the soil, the same unwearying work.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

464 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292 494] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 219 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live (").

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

181 The dwelling of the fellah, like his work, derives its character from the soil, the manner of his life, and the social environment. The fellah is housed by the same earth that feeds him. He is a man of the soil in the true sense of the word. Here it is true that matter determines form.

333 The staple building-material is a mixture of clayey soil,
331 straw (from barley, beans, or flax), cow-dung, and Nile water.
342 This may be smeared over both sides of a rough framework of maize stalks, palm leaves, or reeds, to make the mud walls of the poorest type of house. It may be poured into wooden moulds to make crude bricks (*tûb akhdar*), which are dried in the sun and then used for building. The mortar used to join them is made of the same simple mixture, and so is the plaster which sometimes covers and protects the walls.

A wall so constructed, to be strong enough, must be from twelve to eighteen inches thick. A fellah with money to spare will build on a foundation of kiln-baked bricks (*tûb ahmar*) or of limestone rubble. This prevents the damp

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

● 181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
● 181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water
271 that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as
823 not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river
823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter IX

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FELLAH

The peasant masses live on their own resources, without any contribution to speak of from outside. This is their strength and their weakness. A peasant is born, whereas a worker is made. The constant influence of the fellah's environment cannot fail to mould not only his body, but his soul as well. 181 183

We now know what the fertile Valley of the Nile, on the one hand, and the pressure of the social pyramid, on the other, consists in. The demands of both enslave the fellah; his life is all dependence—dependence on the soil, on material things, on the living and on the dead. The fellah must always obey, like a child under age ; such is the framework within which the outlines of his temperament are drawn. However difficult and however liable to misleading generalisations any study of collective psychology may be, we can nevertheless trace with sufficient accuracy the essential features of the mind and character of the fellaheen. The common factors of country, race, religion, social status, and manner of life, all of which we have considered in the foregoing chapters, entitle us to write in the singular of the fellah's soul.

It would be easy but unjust to judge him on a single point, as his masters do. "The fellah is lazy", they say. "All bodily labour is an effort to him. So he would rather live without bettering his condition than tire himself".

"The fellah is hardly ever grateful. However good his masters may be to him, he never shows them the least sympathy. He swears devotion to them when they are there and is active and hardworking ; but as soon as their backs are turned he becomes slack again and loses all initiative. "The fellaheen are a cowardly, cringing lot". "They are stupid, evil people. They take every opportunity of cheating you."

181 Other landowners or *nazers* take a better view. They
183 say : "Under their noisy exterior, our fellaheen are quiet, gentle people. They are satisfied with their lot, but rarely grateful. They have no interests apart from the soil." "The fellah is always happy and grateful. He is a hard and trusty worker."

114 Some of these opinions, which are taken at random from
181 both Upper and Lower Egypt, seem flatly contradictory. They
183 are not enough to make up a portrait, in spite of the good intentions of those who gave them ; they all arise from a misunderstanding of the fellah and are in both senses of the word *partial* truths. The living reality is more complex. It would be an error of simplification to say 'Man is born good and it is society that makes him bad', or to look at only one side, the good or the evil, according to one's sympathy or lack of sympathy with the subject, or to one's own characteristic personal philosophy and outlook. To create a true picture, all these aspects must be taken into account. As in the old stereoscope, the image cannot appear in depth until both views are seen together, when there is a real combination of elements.

181 One important point must have become clear from what
183 has already been said : that the fellah's intelligence is rather collective than personal, and more static than dynamic. His wisdom and experience have crystallised into pithy sayings and proverbs, which are ready coin for all the different circumstances of his life and absolve him from individual thinking.

The fellah preserves and repeats, but does not originate anything. Any improvements or inventions introduced into agriculture or housing have been imposed on him from outside. Through constant acceptance and submission his intelligence has become atrophied and passive. It is always kept in leading-strings and never stimulated to innovation. That would mean running risks and disturbing a torpor which protects him from unnecessary suffering. What a man knows is better than what he does not know.

This lack of personality and initiative furnishes in its turn an explanation for the want of sensibility or of any living art among the fellaheen. They are uncultivated in this direction less because they are illiterate than because they neither think nor strive. In their fellah costume, in

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for /81
the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. /83
Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy.

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by [303]
accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow.

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the /81
climate might explain this. But what can explain the /82
apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race?

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. [142
Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is 839]
fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries.

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the *development of his mind. Intelligence is* developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (*)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah
562 practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[823] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
181 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his crediti-
565 tor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 578 754

181 This fear and mistrust, justified by long ages of extor-
183 tion and betrayal, make the fellah selfish and unable to see anything except as it touches himself. When he saves, it is in the greatest secrecy. If he has done good business, he will take great care not to speak about it ; so closely does misfortune dog prosperity. When matters of profit, land or women — the usual causes of division — are no longer in question, then the social instinct becomes paramount. We have seen how gregarious the fellaheen are in their work, their rejoicings and their sorrows. This sociability, when there is imminent danger to face, turns into solidarity. More usually it results in good humour and childlike display.

The more the fellah has saved up in thes ecret hiding-place in his home, the more likely he is to be carried away by the crowd at a holiday feast and squander it, for show as much as for enjoyment, like a child who cannot resist the temptation of a shop-window.

He is light-hearted, because neither past nor future worries him. He enjoys to the full the present moment : *Carpe diem.* When interrupted by an order, he replies "Tomorrow" (*bukra*), driving what he has to do out of the range of his consciousness, holding as long as he can to the present. Even when he has to obey at once he replies "*Hadir*" (presently) or "*Tayyib*" (very well) without any intention of hurrying himself. Everything in its own time. As he hopes for no improvement, why should he exert himself ? His torpor is his refuge, his *kaif*, that is to say his 'how', the way things suit him.

Kaif is a word of profound significance, expressing a kind of wakeful passivity which means doing nothing, saying nothing, thinking nothing. It is a form of perfect patience, taught him by the soil. To keep his mind half awake, to wait without apparent activity, or to drown activity in a private fantasy, in a humming which lulls his work and all his movement, in a mental languor which softens the shocks of human contact, that is *kaif*, the fundamental attitude of the fellah, a semi-consciousness which abates suffering.

He will come several hours early to catch a train, but may equally well arrive several hours late for an appointment. Punctuality, precision and haste are beyond his ken. Why should he set limits to the present or hustle it away ?

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :

Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrizi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183] ignorance and tyranny. (*)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831 how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524 with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857] animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. [684] As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735 to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183 home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771 beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183 They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771 wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812 It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437 no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (*) *in sha Allah*."

"Five camels, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
437 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawdga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God,
● 181 and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give
in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes.
God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the
sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism
and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the
splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his
ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is
admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good.
All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for
God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter
this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not co
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they
are by nature believers. They have always been power-
fully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural,
holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fella-
heen live among them and for them with a devotion and
self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely
be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks
of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fella-
heen (").

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

CHAPTER X

THE FELLAH AND PROGRESS

In the great square in front of Cairo station stands a massive group of statuary hewn from Aswan granite. It represents the Sphinx rising on its forefeet, with a woman standing beside it, her hand on the nape of its neck, and her veil raised. This is *The Reawakening of Egypt*, by an Egyptian sculptor, Mukhtar. E 532

During the last half century Egypt has made more progress than any other Near Eastern or Islamic country. Politically she has become independent first of Turkey and then of England, and established herself as a sovereign State. This evolution has been made possible by the birth and growth in a whole class of the idea of nationality and a consciousness of the destiny of the Egyptian nation. Since 1923 the Kingdom of Egypt has had Ambassadors and Consuls abroad, a purely Egyptian Government, a parliamentary life and an opposition, universal suffrage and political parties with electoral programmes, ministries and a more and more specialised civil service — in short the whole paraphernalia of a modern state. E 173 178

Nevertheless this political life affects only a tenth of the total population. The fellaheen, who constitute the remaining nine-tenths of passive and unorganised citizens, take no more part in it now than formerly, when Turks or English ruled the country. F 181 184

They are either ignorant of the existence of all these new ideas we have just mentioned, or they have no understanding of them. They are Wafdists if you like — that is to say, members of the Nationalist Party — in the sense that the *'Omda* or the political agents have written their names in the party lists, but they are neither active members nor even supporters in the way Russian peasants would be, for example. No-one has taught them their rights and privileges. Demo- F 184 665

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. E 873
In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria.
The Government's primary and secondary schools count E
their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed [872]
with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, E
reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the [204 214]
best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not E
more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-* [658]
Fellah, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to E 814
Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo 815
or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national E 812
language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, 814
something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not 641
just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this 178
development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal ? E F 369
Are they following the élite of the cities ? The answer is : 178
either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is 212
discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelm- E
ing majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise F
it. (") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who 636
developed everything in Egypt except education ; with the 181
fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no 871
eagerness to learn ; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of F
the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know 212
how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

511
735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.
656 The greater number of official measures, for example,
746 are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *koḥl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarūī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]

(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *shūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *koḥl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awshar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]

[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]

[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *habbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XII*, 207. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisâ*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

955 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[994] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [953] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

● 181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114 ited to a few pages, and yet it is just these which are vastly more important to us Egyptologists, for the history of culture. But the work of a layman's leisure hours can not produce a supplement to Lane.

Some young, efficient Arabist, with open eyes and a fondness for the land and inhabitants, and possessed of sufficient knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Coptic language, ought to bury himself for two or three years, in an Upper Egyptian village. I am convinced that this sacrifice would be richly repaid in regard to the Arabic language also. It can not be accomplished by mere visits during the season.[1]

Up to this time next to nothing has been done in this direction[2], and who knows when it may be too late?

It would please me most of all, if my book should prove an incentive for the production of a better one, which would form a companion-piece to G. Dalman's excellent "Palaestinischer Diwan" (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901).

Heinrich Schaefer.

Steglitz, June 13, 1902.

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[181] [1]) The Egyptians are much more unapproachable and reserved in many things than is apparent from slight contact.

[113] [2]) Klunzinger's splendid book: "Bilder aus Ober-Aegypten etc." (Stuttgart, 1877.) gives a great deal, but not all, by far, of the wealth of material.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 **Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]**

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [941] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Packet Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
[779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people 178 of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied [426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the [369] material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force [182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, op. cit., pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

Chapter Twelve

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

THE preceding chapters represent a study of indigenous education in the village community of Silwa against a full portrait of the community life and organization. While it would be impossible here to gather up all the threads from which the whole survey has been woven, some general observations and conclusions can be made as an expansion of some of the issues already raised.

It must be emphasized here again that the education procedures, content and methods discussed in this work obtain in a relatively homogeneous, isolated community of small landholders. The characteristics and the end-product of these educative measures and child-training practices cannot be generalized without wider research in other areas and provinces having different cultural and economic backgrounds. A particularly relevant type of research would be, for example, in peasant communities of large farms, or in villages where there exists a number of families descended from old aristocratic families. Since large and small farmers may differ in a number of ways that are causally interrelated and self-consistent, one would expect that such differences would have their reflections in some aspects of children's education.[1]

Another general observation emerging from our functional approach is connected with the oft-heard criticisms of the irrationality of certain social institutions and customs in rural Egypt. Many social thinkers and reformers in Egypt have condemned the elaborate and expensive celebrations of circumcision, weddings, and funerals as pitfalls through which the conservative peasant falls into debt. The extended family has also been described as an institution that causes some of its members to shirk responsibility and become indolent.[2] It is apparent that these critics

[1] For sociological formulations concerning the interrelationships of the family, farm economics and kinship amongst a small farm population, see Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, 1940. See also Julian H. Steward, *Area Research*, pp. 123–4.

[2] A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya*. Also L. K. Tao, 'Some Chinese Characteristics in the Light of Chinese Family', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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evaluate such institutions purely from the point of view of their immediate economic rationality and not as means of 'mutual adjustment of purposes in a total situation'. In such above-mentioned occasions, one can hardly fail to note the social values connected with prestige and the elements of reciprocity embodied in these forms of celebrations. Moreover, one cannot ignore the validity of their educative and cohesive functions. Since reciprocity is one of the major stabilizing forces in this community, its importance requires 'spinning out', since 'a solitary presentation of the principle would be ineffective'.[1] The economic method of interpreting social phenomena is one devised by particular workers as a means of considering such phenomena in the light of their particular field, and cannot be accepted as the whole or the sole explanation. The rationality of ceremonies and the functionalism of the extended family must be interpreted in the light of the community's social ends. In this connection, Firth remarks that '. . . economic activity is subordinate to social ends. It is only by studying those ends that one can see how particular economic systems work'.[2] It was pointed out how social and religious values render dealing in usury, or acceptance of compensation, repulsive to the moral code of this community. On the other hand, social prestige and rivalry combined with a weak ego-structure would explain why law-suits about land or other quarrels can be pursued with seemingly endless effort and expense, to the extent that such procedures might cost both sides more than the market value of the object under dispute.

Failure to assess social facts in their total cultural perspective has often militated against the best intentions of reformers. Compulsory education in terms of abolishing illiteracy has yielded negligible results, as shown earlier, even compared with the expenditure allocated to it. It has been related to neither the cultural needs nor the technical skills required in rural communities. Campaigns against infectious diseases must take into account the fact that, to the villagers, fear of contagion is subordinate to the rendering of reciprocal social obligation connected with sickness. The preference for reserving and offering the 'best food' to guests or strangers rather than be eaten by the members of the family for its 'nutritional value' must be viewed and understood first in terms of 'the people's values' concerning hospitality and generosity.

The adherence to traditional customs, beliefs, ways of thinking and living is the basis of the peasants' psychological security. That peasants rigidly adhere to their traditions and do not listen to 'reason' as explained to them by scientists or government officials has its root cause in this

[1] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 400. It is worth noting that in this community, as well as in many other parts of Egypt, the standardised social comments are legion as are also the respective responses in occasions of work, eating, drinking, building a house, after having a haircut, after toilet, on wearing new clothes, after having a bath, and on many other occasions for which good manners necessitate a particular expression or ejaculation and responding to it in a particular way.

[2] R. Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, p. 133.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PREFACE

peasants have welcomed me into their lives has enabled me to get into much closer touch with them than is possible for the ordinary foreigner. I can truly say that the kindness generally that I have received has made the years which I have spent in Egypt the happiest in my life. My desire is that I may be able to continue my work and leave behind me a true record of the many interesting and ancient customs of that most attractive country.

To my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, I am indebted for all the ancient analogies. Not only so, but he has devoted hours to the careful perusal of my manuscript, and moreover has seen this book through the press and made all the indexes, thus enabling me to carry on uninterruptedly my researches in Egypt. If, therefore, the book achieves any success I feel that much of that success will be due to him.

To the Councils of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Folklore Society, to the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society, to the publishers of *Discovery* (Messrs Benn), and to the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Evening News* I am indebted for permission to include in this book articles of mine that have already appeared in their various journals and papers.

To Professor J. L. Myres I must here express my sincere thanks for reading through all the proofs in collaboration with my brother; and to Mr E. S. Thomas, late of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and now Assistant in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, thanks are due for supplying me with better translations of the Arabic charms, etc., than I had before.

All the photographs, I should state, have been taken by myself, with the exception of a few which were taken in 1920 by my friend Mr D. J. V. Forster, of Pembroke College, Oxford, at my request, on the occasions when he was present with me at the ceremonies which they illustrate.

I have purposely suppressed the names of people and villages in nearly every instance as I do not think it would be either desirable or fair (see p. 231) to publish them in a semi-popular book of this kind.

Finally, I should like to point out that with the spread of education the old customs and beliefs are already beginning to die out. It is thus most important that they should be recorded at once, before they suffer complete extinction. I hope, therefore, that my work

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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INTRODUCTION

ON UNDERSTANDING THE FELLAH

A country's peasantry is like the small particles in a sentence, or the strips of leading in a stained-glass window. It binds the nation together, gives it stability and character. It provides that humble but indispensable support on which both economic and social systems rely. By producing more than it consumes, the peasantry maintains society in health, and ensures a sound regularity to the state finances. 182

But the peasantry as a class is composed of separate individuals, of men. Enslaved as they may be to soil and seasons, long-suffering and slow, hide-bound and unprogressive as they appear to us, it is these people above all others who deserve the name of men. 565 182

Too long have we confused the producer with his product and the worker with the fruits of his labour. We have taken our fill of the harvest without a thought for the man who made it grow. We have failed to notice the distress which he himself could not put into words, and perhaps only half felt. And so today we are astonished at the reawakening of the peasantry, and realise with a shock of surprise what a dead weight of ignorance has been allowed to accumulate, both in official circles and in society at large, about the man of the soil. 114

By developing the themes of pastoralism and of natural beauty, and so confounding the peasant with his background, poets and artists of all ages, from Virgil to the present day, have conspired to draw a veil of illusion over the realities of country life. They have given us wonderful pictures, to be sure, but in so doing they have accustomed us to see in country life nothing but its picturesque and sentimental side, to find in an image the whole reality. The "sower's

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771 Out of reverence for the past, which for the ignorant
● 182 fellah is shrouded in mystery, a system of rites has been
183 evolved, which he considers inviolable. This, while maintaining and comforting the individual, at the same time stifles his liberty and initiative and dulls his spirit until he is no longer able to distinguish between the essential and the superfluous.

But this structure, however vast it may be, does not constitute the whole of the fellah's psychology. It is one of the pressures he has to bear. Like the pressure of the soil and of living men, it warps him considerably, but it is no more able than they are to destroy his soul.

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for /81
the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. /83
Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy.

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by [803] accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow.

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the /81
climate might explain this. But what can explain the /82
apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race?

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. [142
Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is [839]
fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries.

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hanginan's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for in- [171]
stance, that of Hermes on the 19th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by
hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive
away the *barjna*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [176] [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and ter-

FOREWORD

The "Fellaheen" of Egypt are the oldest peasantry in the world. History teaches us this, and also that the Valley of the Nile shows the oldest records of civilised and cultural life. 101

Throughout thousands of years our peasantry has kept its customs, habits, character, and type in a remarkably steady manner. 183

It is still essentially what it was in the far-distant Pharaonic days : one of the two main pillars of Egypt's wealth and well-being. The other, as Herodotus remarked long ago, is the river Nile.

A great deal has been said about the Fellah, particularly during the last few decades, and there is a vast amount of literature about Egypt and its people. Seldom, however, has a writer devoted his main interest to the study of the Egyptian peasant as a human type, looking at him, his character, his culture and traditions, with sympathy, objectivity, and an unbiased view. 114

The present book fills this gap in the literature about our country. We owe its author our sincerest thanks. 000

The more one really studies the Fellaheen of Egypt, the more one will discard a lot of mistaken ideas about their character. Now that the country has come to a turning-point of its history, it is essential that its people as a whole should be fully aware of the tremendous task ahead of them. A complete and intimate collaboration among all classes, a particularly sympathetic understanding — and not just a platonic one — of their peasantry by the upper class and landowners, is the basis and most important element of this patriotic cooperation. The "Fellah", whether as a small — and how small! — landowner or as an agri-

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [914] [807]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [783]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 841 [183] [581]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age.

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay.

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced.

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1]

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 882 883

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 883 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [834]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [882]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 136. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation. [841]

[For examples, see Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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PREFACE

THIS book represents but a small portion of the work upon which I have been engaged in Egypt during the last six years. I have spent, on an average, six months annually in the country, living almost entirely among the *fellāḥīn*. I wish to make it quite clear to my readers that the customs and beliefs, and the general manner of life, described in this book represent those of the peasants only; by the upper classes they have, of course, long been discarded. These customs and beliefs are of great importance and interest in themselves, but the fact that most of them are very ancient makes it still more urgent that they should be adequately studied and recorded. Already my researches have thrown light on points hitherto obscure to students of ancient Egypt; hence this book may, I hope, be not only an addition to anthropological knowledge, but also a contribution to Egyptology.

It has been my aim to describe the life of the modern inhabitants of the Nile Valley in the simplest way, avoiding technical language, for my purpose in writing this book has been to interest the general public and present them with a readable and, at the same time, true description of the peasants of Egypt.

I want to emphasize the fact that though the contents of this book form but a tithe of the information I have collected, yet even so I am only at the beginning of my work. Many years of research still lie ahead of me, for the sources of information are very far from exhausted. When my work is more nearly complete my intention is to produce a large and strictly scientific volume on the beliefs and practices and the social and industrial life of the modern Egyptians.

I have endeavoured to be strictly accurate in all my statements. Every custom and belief here dealt with has been most carefully inquired into before I committed it to paper. Nevertheless, those who are experienced field-workers in anthropology know how easy it is to make mistakes and to misunderstand, even after careful investigation, the true inwardness of things. I therefore invite

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organised* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 559 [459] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
193 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes
121 these classes less stable, but more progressive.

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

to him both their qualities and their defects. It is because 181
the fellah 'buries' himself in this mud that it has become so 183
fertile. Egypt, gift of the Nile, is no less a gift of the fellah. 132
It is because this soil has incarnated itself in the fellah 133
that he himself is so enduring, but also so material, so 121
stagnant.

Progress then must come from some form of release, of emergence, from education in the original sense of drawing out potentialities. The true duty of society is to liberate the fellah's spirit from its stifling envelope of mud; to free him from the defects of the soil, while leaving him its good qualities. The initiative can never come from his own community, which is completely numbed and powerless, but only from the classes which overshadow him, from the *élite*, who with their riches of mind and money can vitalise him. In this dough must work the leaven of intelligence and sympathy.

The following chapters will illustrate in detail these general remarks, and bring us by the logic of facts to the human conclusion which we have here outlined.

Chapter IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

241 312 It has been calculated that by this method little more than 200 cubic feet of water, or enough for about one acre, can be raised in a day of twelve hours. Such a yield bears no reasonable proportion to the effort exerted, but the instrument is extremely cheap. As long as poverty remains, such methods will continue in use.

This method is called *nattâla*. It was already known to the fellaheen of Ancient Egypt [22] and is used by Japanese peasants, for example on Shikoku.

Second Method

One or two men crouch at the water's edge, turning and turning the crank handle of a wooden cylinder, which reaches from water level to the mouth of the runnel. The water rises spirally inside this cylinder, which is about 18 ins. across. This is the *tambour* or Archimedean screw, a wooden cylinder hooped with iron and about six or nine feet in length, according as it is turned by one or two men. The spiral is fixed between the inside wall and an iron axis, one end of which is bent into a crank, while the other turns on a stake fixed under water.

The *tambour* can irrigate two or three times as much as a *nattâla*, but it costs more and is heavier to work. Moreover, since it requires the continual use of the forearm, it is very much more tiring. Nevertheless it is still much in use, and may frequently be seen.

These two kinds of water-lifting machinery are practicable when the water level is not very low, but sometimes water has to be sought three, six or even thirty feet below the level of the field to be irrigated.

The easiest thing would be to instal a pumping engine. There are many of these on the large estates, but none on small properties; for as the fellaheen are numerous and [181 183] conservative, poor in money and rich in time, this "convenience" does not commend itself to them. They solved the watering problem ages ago in a way which matches their means, and they feel no need to desert their present system for one which may possibly be better, but which is as yet new and untried.

To raise water from a depth of more than three feet the fellah uses a method as primitive as it is simple. He plants

427 511 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken from us, we will steal." ([illegible])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 554 183 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoosa*.

183 651 452 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 427 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([illegible]).

423 432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

552 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

donkey to the fields and the *gamoosa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
siga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([41]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They are recorded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

771 Out of reverence for the past, which for the ignorant
182 fellah is shrouded in mystery, a system of rites has been
183 evolved, which he considers inviolable. This, while maintaining and comforting the individual, at the same time stifles his liberty and initiative and dulls his spirit until he is no longer able to distinguish between the essential and the superfluous.

But this structure, however vast it may be, does not constitute the whole of the fellah's psychology. It is one of the pressures he has to bear. Like the pressure of the soil and of living men, it warps him considerably, but it is no more able than they are to destroy his soul.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter IX

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FELLAH

The peasant masses live on their own resources, without any contribution to speak of from outside. This is their strength and their weakness. A peasant is born, whereas a worker is made. The constant influence of the fellah's environment cannot fail to mould not only his body, but his soul as well. 181 183

We now know what the fertile Valley of the Nile, on the one hand, and the pressure of the social pyramid, on the other, consists in. The demands of both enslave the fellah; his life is all dependence—dependence on the soil, on material things, on the living and on the dead. The fellah must always obey, like a child under age; such is the framework within which the outlines of his temperament are drawn. However difficult and however liable to misleading generalisations any study of collective psychology may be, we can nevertheless trace with sufficient accuracy the essential features of the mind and character of the fellaheen. The common factors of country, race, religion, social status, and manner of life, all of which we have considered in the foregoing chapters, entitle us to write in the singular of the fellah's soul.

It would be easy but unjust to judge him on a single point, as his masters do. "The fellah is lazy", they say. "All bodily labour is an effort to him. So he would rather live without bettering his condition than tire himself".

"The fellah is hardly ever grateful. However good his masters may be to him, he never shows them the least sympathy. He swears devotion to them when they are there and is active and hardworking; but as soon as their backs are turned he becomes slack again and loses all initiative. "The fellaheen are a cowardly, cringing lot". "They are stupid, evil people. They take every opportunity of cheating you."

181 Other landowners or *nazers* take a better view. They
183 say : "Under their noisy exterior, our fellaheen are quiet, gentle people. They are satisfied with their lot, but rarely grateful. They have no interests apart from the soil." "The fellah is always happy and grateful. He is a hard and trusty worker."

114 Some of these opinions, which are taken at random from
181 both Upper and Lower Egypt, seem flatly contradictory. They
183 are not enough to make up a portrait, in spite of the good intentions of those who gave them ; they all arise from a misunderstanding of the fellah and are in both senses of the word *partial* truths. The living reality is more complex. It would be an error of simplification to say 'Man is born good and it is society that makes him bad', or to look at only one side, the good or the evil, according to one's sympathy or lack of sympathy with the subject, or to one's own characteristic personal philosophy and outlook. To create a true picture, all these aspects must be taken into account. As in the old stereoscope, the image cannot appear in depth until both views are seen together, when there is a real combination of elements.

181 One important point must have become clear from what
183 has already been said : that the fellah's intelligence is rather collective than personal, and more static than dynamic. His wisdom and experience have crystallised into pithy sayings and proverbs, which are ready coin for all the different circumstances of his life and absolve him from individual thinking.

The fellah preserves and repeats, but does not originate anything. Any improvements or inventions introduced into agriculture or housing have been imposed on him from outside. Through constant acceptance and submission his intelligence has become atrophied and passive. It is always kept in leading-strings and never stimulated to innovation. That would mean running risks and disturbing a torpor which protects him from unnecessary suffering. What a man knows is better than what he does not know.

This lack of personality and initiative furnishes in its turn an explanation for the want of sensibility or of any living art among the fellaheen. They are uncultivated in this direction less because they are illiterate than because they neither think nor strive. In their fellah costume, in

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for /81
the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. /83
Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy.

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by [803]
accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow.

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the /81
climate might explain this. But what can explain the /82
apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race?

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. [142
Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is [839]
fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries.

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (*)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah
562 practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[523] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

181 The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
565 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his creditor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever.

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day...

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate.

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'."

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered.

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity.

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye.

81 This fear and mistrust, justified by long ages of extor-
83 tion and betrayal, make the fellah selfish and unable to see anything except as it touches himself. When he saves, it is in the greatest secrecy. If he has done good business, he will take great care not to speak about it ; so closely does misfortune dog prosperity. When matters of profit, land or women — the usual causes of division — are no longer in question, then the social instinct becomes paramount. We have seen how gregarious the fellaheen are in their work, their rejoicings and their sorrows. This sociability, when there is imminent danger to face, turns into solidarity. More usually it results in good humour and childlike display.

The more the fellah has saved up in thes ecret hiding-place in his home, the more likely he is to be carried away by the crowd at a holiday feast and squander it, for show as much as for enjoyment, like a child who cannot resist the temptation of a shop-window.

He is light-hearted, because neither past nor future worries him. He enjoys to the full the present moment : *Carpe diem.* When interrupted by an order, he replies "Tomorrow" (*bukra*), driving what he has to do out of the range of his consciousness, holding as long as he can to the present. Even when he has to obey at once he replies "*Hadir*" (presently) or "*Tayyib*" (very well) without any intention of hurrying himself. Everything in its own time. As he hopes for no improvement, why should he exert himself ? His torpor is his refuge, his *kaif*, that is to say his 'how', the way things suit him.

Kaif is a word of profound significance, expressing a kind of wakeful passivity which means doing nothing, saying nothing, thinking nothing. It is a form of perfect patience, taught him by the soil. To keep his mind half awake, to wait without apparent activity, or to drown activity in a private fantasy, in a humming which lulls his work and all his movement, in a mental languor which softens the shocks of human contact, that is *kaif*, the fundamental attitude of the fellah, a semi-consciousness which abates suffering.

He will come several hours early to catch a train, but may equally well arrive several hours late for an appointment. Punctuality, precision and haste are beyond his ken. Why should he set limits to the present or hustle it away ?

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrîzi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 [183] In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (")

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831 how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524 with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857] animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684] fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735 to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183 home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771 beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183 They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771 wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812 It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437 no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (") *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
437 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawâga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([10]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([11]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

744 to provide public conveniences, in the effort to combat the diseases which lessen the fellah's output ? The Ministry of Public Health, founded in 1934, has given this question priority in its programme, but it has not a large budget, and most of its income goes to pay the salaries of its officials. It has, however, some genuine achievements to its credit. Sixty-seven dispensaries, permanent or travelling, are fighting bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. There are as many hospitals, with about four thousand beds in all, for serious illnesses. In 1936 there were 111 eye-clinics, which had treated 1,133,599 patients. Infant welfare is organised in some forty centres. Doctors, midwives, and visiting nurses, instead of waiting for the peasant woman to come and ask for help, go round from house to house to give treatment and advice. At least half a million visits have been made. By 1937 there were about five thousand certified midwives, who had taken a six months' course in a maternity hospital, and eight thousand of the second class, who had from three to six weeks' training.

744 747 To these splendid efforts must be added the even more devoted labours of private institutions : the dispensaries and home visits of the Franciscan Sisters of Egypt and the many other Catholic sisterhoods, the Protestant foundations, such as the C.M.S. and the American Mission, and the more recent and methodical 'social centres' established in a dozen villages in the Delta.

It is a vast field, and these efforts up to the present have affected only thousands out of millions. Even those fortunate few often lose the benefit of their medical treatment through their ignorance, their unhygienic habits, and their poverty. These are the obstacles to progress.

183 744 A model village has no power to make the fellah a healthy man, immune from sickness. The work of the authorities in the provinces is hardly more succesful. So long as the fellah keeps his present ways of thought and the ignorance that hinders him from knowing what is good for him and what is not, he will remain, in spite of all the improvements that are offered him, exactly as he is today. He will refuse [271 356] filtered water and drink the impure water his fathers drank. Give him a light, airy, healthy dwelling, and he will pervert it to his own manner of life. He will still be unable to 183 profit from the laws and institutions provided to help him.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is /183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- /185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe /183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, /185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").
As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the /166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside /162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary /166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other /184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah; but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (30). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 7-8 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

provided these show real cordiality and interest and have come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 183 185

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism. 748

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the *'ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work. [538]

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and spiritual help : material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes : spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism .... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity." 121

[page 160 is blank]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa,
121 a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of
101 the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

562 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences
189 between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue.

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later.

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study.

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 63 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [524] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

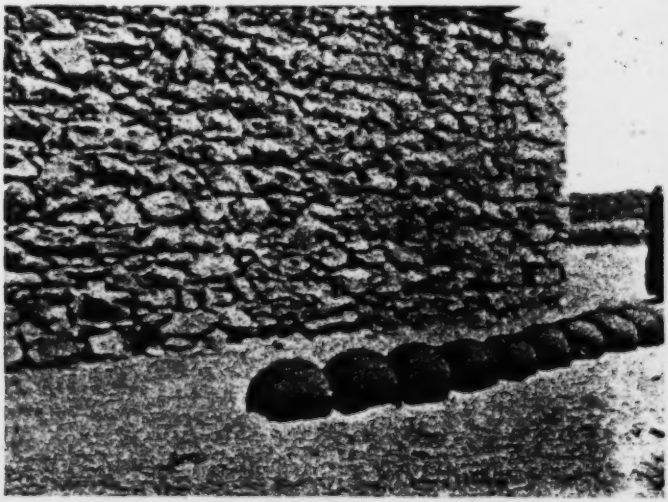
[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

F they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town,
361 as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F The standard of living is practically invariable every-
511 where, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.
184 Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F In Europe it is often said that the church building gives
361 its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or
346 the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C
F 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a
779 million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor
779 children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the
771 five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F Of their belief in God something will be said later on.
782 Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several
796 times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*,
516 they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (**)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah
562 practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[823] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

181 The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
565 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his creditor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

CHAPTER X

THE FELLAH AND PROGRESS

In the great square in front of Cairo station stands a massive group of statuary hewn from Aswan granite. It represents the Sphinx rising on its forefeet, with a woman standing beside it, her hand on the nape of its neck, and her veil raised. This is *The Reawakening of Egypt*, by an Egyptian sculptor, Mukhtar. E 532

During the last half century Egypt has made more progress than any other Near Eastern or Islamic country. Politically she has become independent first of Turkey and then of England, and established herself as a sovereign State. This evolution has been made possible by the birth and growth in a whole class of the idea of nationality and a consciousness of the destiny of the Egyptian nation. Since 1923 the Kingdom of Egypt has had Ambassadors and Consuls abroad, a purely Egyptian Government, a parliamentary life and an opposition, universal suffrage and political parties with electoral programmes, ministries and a more and more specialised civil service — in short the whole paraphernalia of a modern state. E 175 178

Nevertheless this political life affects only a tenth of the total population. The fellaheen, who constitute the remaining nine-tenths of passive and unorganised citizens, take no more part in it now than formerly, when Turks or English ruled the country. F 181 184

They are either ignorant of the existence of all these new ideas we have just mentioned, or they have no understanding of them. They are Wafdists if you like — that is to say, members of the Nationalist Party — in the sense that the *'Omda* or the political agents have written their names in the party lists, but they are neither active members nor even supporters in the way Russian peasants would be, for example. No-one has taught them their rights and privileges. Demo- F 184 665

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([70]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([71]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (73).

●184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (74). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and [651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah [681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows [731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has [661 suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to [453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is education. /183

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not founded on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious. /185 203

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, and that his present state of insensibility and habituation is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same. /183 /185 871

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").

As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land. /166

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer /162 /166 /184

F
184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened — a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper
F Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower
162 Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The
166 *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo
186 shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according
166 to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves
E that they hope to return. They find work most often as
464 building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess* ; they
465 are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 a day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and always in danger of unemployment.

E After a few years' experience some come back to their
166 native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off
464 to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the
511 city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers,
557 fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

511
735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not
656 scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.

746 The greater number of official measures, for example, are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah, but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (**). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 7-8 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE ḲARĪN AND ḲARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

·114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448–451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarīna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarīna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayūm and Asyūṭ Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarīna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *aḥrān* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the [751] iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyūṭ Province and also from one in Fayūm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *felláḥîn*.[1]

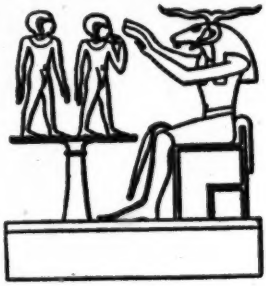


FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *ḳarîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *ḳarîn* and a woman a *ḳarîneh* is correct, at any rate among many of the *felláḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845 776]

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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NATIVE PLOUGH IN EGYPT

BY

MOHAMED RIAD

Since millenia the cultivable soils of Egypt is confined to the Delta and 407*
the Valley of the Nile. This soil was deposited by the Nile through immemo- 241
rial times and as a result it is composed, generally speaking, of nearly 134
homogeneous fine particles which attain a mean depth of about 10 meters. The fact that such thickness and homogeneity of the cultivated soils rendering the minimum of soil variations has contributed much to the form and technique of the prevailing plough in Egypt. In fact the Egyptian plough is a simple one which is used to break the soil and not like other contemporary ploughs in Europe and elsewhere, does not invert the soil. This may be due to the aforementioned reason, i. e., the homogeneity of the soil, as much as other physical factors foremost among them are the yearly deposition of new soils through the agency of the flood on the one hand, and the penetration of air through the soil particles during the inter-planting period on the other hand. These factors and others 241
did not necessitate deep ploughing or soil inversion, and as long as these 407*
factors remained in control of the type of cultivation in Egypt —which it did all over the history of agriculture in Egypt, due to the system of Basin Irrigation, —the evolution of the Egyptian plough was and is very slow in what concerns the major lines of form and technique. Yet there exist in Egypt at the present time two substantially different types [184]
of ploughs which function in similar physical conditions but exist in different regions. Building a co-existence among these two plough types, mixed offshoots arose to balance the picture and to ease the sharpness of plough boundary in the relatively small cultivable area of Egypt. Now we can differentiate at least seven plough types each with [184]
a limited geographic area.

[p241]

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GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLOUGH TYPES

*407 ●184 The seven mentioned plough types which prevail in Egypt, reproduced in plates 1 to 4, are as follows :

Type I : the split handle, straight beamed type. This type prevails in both Western and Central Delta with the exception of the south-eastern area of Central Delta.

Type II : the single handle, curved beam plough. This type, one of the two basic ploughs in Egypt, prevails in the Eastern Delta roughly south of 31 degree of North Latitudes. It also exists in the south-eastern parts of the Central Delta.

Type III : the single handle, straight beamed plough. This type, being a mixture of both previous types, prevails spatially in the same region type II occupies.

Type IV : the right-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type prevails in the northern Provinces of Upper Egypt and reaches southwards as far as the boundary of Minya and Assiut Provinces. Nearly the same type prevails in the North-eastern Delta, roughly in a pocket to the north of Latitude 31, bordered by Lake Manzala to the East and north-East, and by the Damietta branch of the Nile's Delta to the West and north-West.

Type V : the obtuse-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type is the second of the two basic plough forms in Egypt, and prevails in southern Upper Egypt.

Type VI : the single handle, straight and short beamed plough. This [241] type is the usual garden type, and has many varieties, some wheeled while others are not wheeled but possess a fork-like extension of the beam, etc... This is extensively used in the Delta, and rarely found in Upper Egypt.

Type VII : the single handle, straight beamed, and wheeled plough. [241] This type is usually used in light soils, especially nearer to the edge of the desert in Eastern Delta.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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*407 3. Handles and Grip.—The handles are all over Egypt made of wood and attain the height of between 100 and 110 cms. As already mentioned the handle or handles are fixed to the base in different methods which will be explained later. The grip is also a wooden peg either protrouding longitudinally in the case of one handle, or split handle, or a cross beam fixed to the two handles in the double handled types. The handles and the grip serve in the Egyptian ploughs to control the manouvering of the plough and the depth of the ploughing and are handled either by one hand or both hands according to the manner in which the grip is fixed.

4. The Beam.—It is either a straight or curved wooden pole which is attached to the base in different ways, and serves to connect the whole plough with the yoke by inserting a cross peg in a socket holed at the fore end of the beam. The beam attains a length which varies between 300 cms. and 350 cms. and usually has a square cross-section of 10 by 10 cms.

5. The Pin.—This is an iron bar which attains the length of about 50 cms. and a breadth of about 4 cms. This type of pin prevails all over ploughes in Egypt except in type V where we find the pin made of wood. Moreover the iron pin has a set of holes in which a peg is inserted over the beam to prevent it from springing upwards during ploughing, and at the same time controls the angle of the plough.

492 6. The Yoke. This is a wooden pole of about 270 cms. in length, which is put on necks of the animals drawing the plough. To fulfil its purpose the yoke has five pegs: one in the middle to which the rope connecting it to the beam is attached, and two pegs at each end of the yoke to which the two ends of the rope which encircles the neck of the animal are tied. Such a yoke is universal all over Egypt except in type VI where the plough is drawn by one animal, thus requiring a small curved yoke to which the single animal is harnessed.

[184] [241]

*407 Such are the basic parts of the Egyptian plough and the previous description will be found useful in both understanding the structure of the plough at large, and illuminating in the following comparison.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PLOUGH PARTS

407*
[184]

1. The Base. – The above mentioned description of the base is well preserved in all types of ploughes in Egypt, but they differ in what concerns the way in which other parts of the plough are mounted on it. In all the types we find that the base is hollowed about its centre to enable to insert the pin but this hole is different in types IV and V because here we find that the pin – though of wood in type V and of iron in type IV – has a wooden supporter attached to it. In type III there is also a kind of supporter which does not function in the same way as in types IV and V, but it has its place next to the pin and thus a special cavity is necessitated near the hollow of the pin. Furthermore the base is bored at about 10 cms. from its butt end to insert the single handle of ploughs belonging to types II, III, VI, and VII. It is also found that the base of type II has another hollow between the hollow of the handle and that of the pin; this is used as a socket to insert the end of the curved beam inside the base. In types I and IV the sides of the base near the butt end are a little bit chiselled to enable to fix the lower ends of the split handle (type I) or the right angled handles (type IV) to the base, but the cavity in both sides is never deep and the lower ends of the handles remain protruding. Again in type V the sides of the base are chiselled deep enough to eliminate the lower ends of the curved handles from sticking out. As the arms of this curved handles are comparatively long, the sides of the base are chiselled all the way through more than a third of the whole length of the base. Moreover some 10 cms. from the rear end of this base the sides are again re-chiselled to the end to enable fixing the beam to the base. Thus we may conclude that the horizontal projection of the base will take a more or less regular form of a broad rear end tappering slowly forwards in all types except in type V where we will find it broadest near the middle and while tappering slowly forewards it also narrows rearwards in two definite steps. This special form of the base of plough type V is a necessary technical accomplishment due to the special form of the wide angled curve of the handles on the one hand and the method by which the beam is fixed to the base on the other hand.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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to types IV and V, and the longtudinal grip of both the single handled plough types II, III, VI, and VII, and of the split handled type No. I. From the point of utility a transversal grip should be handled by both hands and thus precondition that the ploughman should go behind the plough. This is indeed the case in type V, but because the handles of type IV are not retreating rearwards it became awkward for the ploughman to handle the plough from behind, and it is usual in this case that he walkes, beside the plough griping it by his right hand. This way of handling the grip is also usual in the cases of the longtudinal grip of all other types. The longtudinal grip differ in form and length in the single handle types than that of the split handle plough. In the last named the grip is a small wooden peg inserted in the upper part of the handle from behind. This peg is so small that it deserves its arabic appellation e'Asfuraa which means a sparrow or a little bird. In fact the ploughman in this type does not use this small grip and instead control the plough by the upper end of the handle. The grip in the case of single handled ploughs is usually a larger wooden peg which is inserted in a socket in the handles and protrudes from both sides of the handle. Thus the grip here serves to handle the whole plough. 407* 241 407*

4. The Share.—All the Egyptian ploughs use the varieties of shares already described above except the share of plough type No. V. Here the share has no wings or neck but take a regular form with a butt end in the rear and a sharp point on the foreward end. 407* [184]

5. The Beam.—We have already detected two kinds of beams in the Egyptian plough, namely the more commonly dispersed straight beam on the one hand and the curved beam which only appears in plough type II on the other hand.

The straight beam differ from one type plough to the other in many respects. In type VI it is to be noted that the beam is considerably short, and a cross pole is fixed to its extremity to enable either a double rope, double longtudinal wooden extension to be fixed at either ends of this cross bar, or a fork-like extension (see plate IV). This is a necessary technical adjustment for the one animal which is assigned to draw such

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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lower hole. One should again stress the fact that though the pin of type IV is made of iron and may have holes like all iron pins of other types, it does not work as a regulator of the plough angle, but the angle is regulated by the beam extension. We can also conclude that a beam extension is technically necessitated by the principles of structure of plough types II, IV, and V, while it does not figure out in other types unless it is added for the sole purpose of completing the length of a much used beam. 407*

6. The Pin. -The pin is used to serve two purposes: as an additional fastener of the beam to the base on the one hand, and to prevent the beam from springing upwards during the ploughing by inserting a peg through the pin over the beam, on the other hand. These two purposes are, universal in all types of the Egyptian plough. But while such functions are preserved in types II, IV and V, another important function is added to the pin in all other types: this being that of regulating the angle of the plough, just refered to above. To fulfil the two purposes of strengthening the beam-base connection and keeping the beam from springing upwards, the pin could be made of wood as it is the case in type V. But to regulate the angle the pin should be made of a different material other than wood. The pin as described above is comparatively short and not so thick as the beam or the yoke; it actually is essentially a sort of a peg. Now if this wooden pin is holed three or four times in the row which we observe in the usual iron pin used in Egypt, the result would be a certain inherent weakness in the wooden pin; because it will not resist the strength of pulling. This simply is the cause why the function of regulating the angle is assigned to the yoke extension in type V, where the wooden pin is used. In type II, the curve of the beam fixes once and for all the angle of the plough, and the pin of this type could easily be made of wood. But using an iron pin in type II is definitely an evidence of cultural adaptation owing to the fact that the area in which this type prevails uses an iron pin. In the case of type IV the iron pin is useless as to the function of regulating the angle of the plough, and its existance is also an evidence of cultural influences. [184] [184]

To relieve the animals from a part of the burden of carrying the whole weight of the yoke and beam, and to keep the beam from falling downwards,

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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*407 a wooden supporter is put next to the pin. This is naturally not the case in type II where the curve of the beam keeps it standing upwards. In type I this supporter is also lacking.

GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS AND INTERRELATIONS FROM PHILOLOGICAL EVIDENCES

197 ●184 *407 It is obvious from both the list of appellations of different parts of the plough and maps on figures 1 and 2, that certain differences in naming the parts of the plough do exist in Egypt. These differences, apart from their importance to the study of dialects in Egypt, reveal some definite geographic regions the boundaries of which are supported by well known cultural elements and historical facts. If these regions which are detected from the study of plough are not totaly new, there is no doubt that their existence is reinforced by new evidences.

Region One: The Delta. The homogeneity of terminology in the Delta is striking. It is only on maps (c) and (d) of fig. 1 that we find a certain specialization in naming the handle and beam of the plough in Eastern Delta. This area is the domain where plough types II, III, VI and VII prevail. The philological differentiation in this respect is deeply rooted in the technicalities of these plough types; they are all single handled, hence these handles deserve the name of « Romh » spear in contradistinction to « Riesh » feathers which is applied to the split handle of type I. Because the beam of type II is curved, hence the term Ous = a bow or a curve. Though plough types III, VI and VII possess a straight beam, they are nevertheless called Ous. This is a fact which undeniably point that type II is of older age in the area, and furthermore gives an evidence that all these types are but off shoots of this type adjusted to the cultural milieu of Egypt as a whole (where the straight beam prevail): the beam changed but the old name persisted.

It is also observed that some appellations in the Delta do not belong to any arabic origin, but are derivations from the Greek or the Latin languages. Thus Winkler think that « Balanga » (= the pin of the plough)

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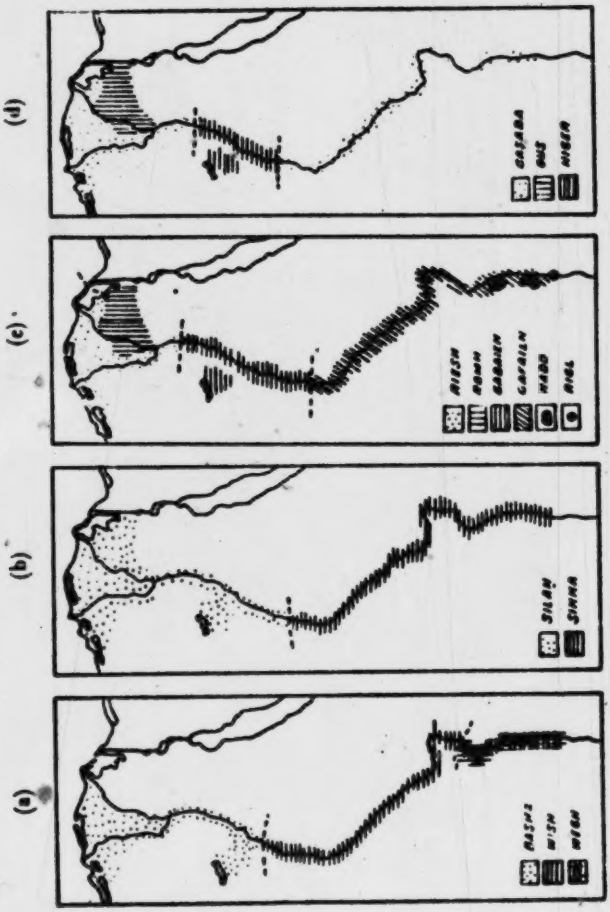

Fig. 1. Appellations of Plough Parts.

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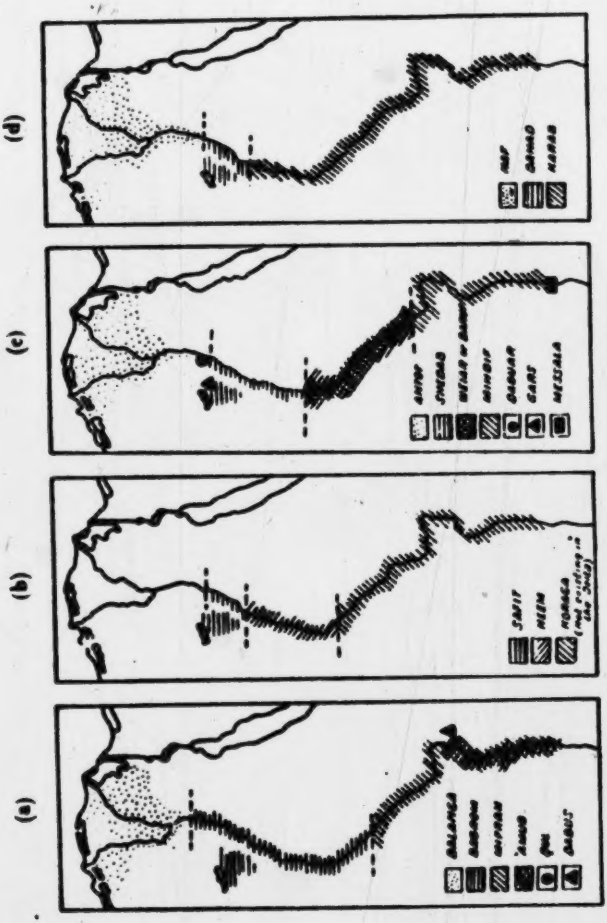

Fig. 8. Appellations of Plough Parts.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

point to the Italian word Bilancia[1]. In this way could we seek the origin of the term « Bazha » (= the base of the plough) to such origins? In addition to these foreign terms there are arabic names, e. g., « Silah » blade or share, « Riesh » = feathers, « Romh » spear, while the words « Antot » and « Naf » may belong to the Coptic or ultimately to the Egyptian languages. In this way we may see that the Delta, though homogeneous, reveal three segmented linguistic and cultural layers: the Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, and the Arabic. This conclusion, supported by historical records, has its reasoning in the geographical situation of the Delta as the northern limits of the Egyptian Nile Valley, as the area facing the Mediterranean, and lastly as the area exposed to Arabia. 197 184 407*

If the Delta is established as one region, we can further divide it in two sub-regions. Leaning on the arguments stated above, the Eastern Delta would stand alone as a sub-region, while the other parts of the Delta would constitute the second sub-region. There is no part of the Delta other than its East which received so many human and cultural elements from the Middle-East and Arabia and it happens that that part, in what concerns the plough, is remarkably different in terminology and technique. This area, where type II is at home, did not only account for the several offshoots of plough forms (types III, VI, VII) but also affected the manner in which the ploughman controls his plough. All over the Delta and Middle Egypt the ploughman marches beside his plough where a split handle or a double handle is used. This, as Winkler rightly pointed out[2] is due to the influence of plough Type II, where the ploughman always walk to the left of the plough. In the same source, Winkler claims that this habit of going beside the plough in itself is an evidence of the prior spread of plough II all over the Delta and Middle Egypt[3]. But we must not build a whole theory upon one factor. It is true, as we shall see below, that a curved beamed plough was discovered in Fayum dating to the Roman Period, but this plough was not single 407* 184 [177] [241]

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1. Winkler, H. A., 1936, p. 162.
2. Winkler, 1936, pp. 148, 150.
3. Winkler, 1936, pp. 150, 163.

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

*407 •184 handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the plougband all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

197 184 *407 *Region Two :* Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e. g., « Wish» and « Wegh» or « Wijh» — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien» or « Gafaien» (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish» for the base, « Sikka» for the share, « Gabaien» for the handles, « Gasaba» for the beam, « Koraga» for the beam extension, and « Karab» for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences [117] from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Baharif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (c) of fig. 1 and map (c) of fig. 2. On map (c) fig. 1 [114] we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Hadd is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities -

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Kelh and Benban were given this terminology by Winkler[1]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennasr, Abu Ibny, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramadi South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of «Wegh» and «Wijh», for the base, «'Amud» instead of «Miftah» for the pin, and «Mindef» instead of «Weiar» or «Barufe» for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North.

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[14]

Region Three: Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area: a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide it to three sub-regions: Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity: the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolised in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have «Higr» for beam, «Bagrom» for pin, «Saflit» for the beam extension, «Shaddab» for the cross peg of the beam extension, and «Danad» for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins. [177]

[1] Winkler, 1936, p. 153.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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either in the Fayum Coptic or with a mixture of Greek origins, for we know that Fayum was once one of the important centers of the Greek Ptolomies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH

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It is a well established fact that the first recorded form of plough is found on the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Many drawings from the Old and the New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt can give us a picture relevant to question of the evolution of the plough. There is also a coloured wooden figure of the plough which belong to the 11th or the 12th dynasty kept in the British Museum, and many original ploughs were found near Fayum which belong to the Greek and Roman periods of the history of Egypt, and which are kept in the different Museums of the world, e. g. Cairo and Berlin. All these examples of the plough covering a very long time span can be used as a sound basis for the study of the history of the present Egyptian plough, if we add to it the description of the plough in the 18th century A. D., recorded by Norden[1], and by the scientists of the French Expedition to Egypt[2].

In an unpublished report in the Agricultural Museum of Cairo, a short note is written on the subject of the ancient Egyptian plough. Extracts from the note runs as follows :

> « The ancient Egyptian traditions alledge that the Egyptians are indebted to Osiris, God of Plants in the Egyptian Panthaeon, for the knowledge of the plough. Evidences from early drawings prove that the plough in its original form was worked only by man, and it was only drawn by oxen in the drawings of Meidum, i.e., begining from the third Dynasty. In that form the plough had only one wooden share for ploughing the soft soils ; and had a double wooden share covered by a sheet of bronze to plough harder soils.... The plough was called in the Egyptian language SIKKA. »

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(1) See references under Norden.
(2) See references under Girard.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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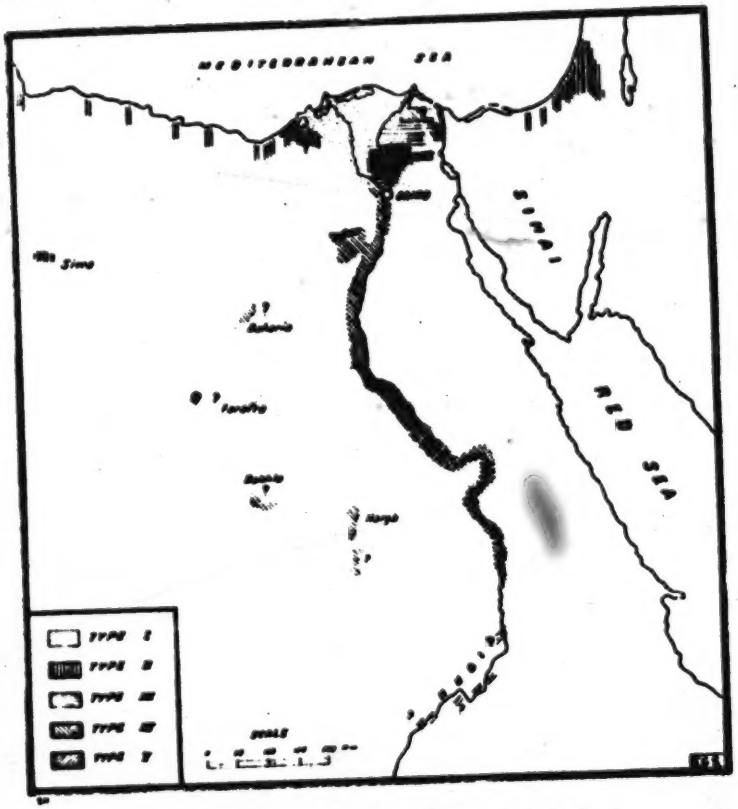

Fig. 3. Regional Distribution of Plough Types in Egypt.

RETROSPECT

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The basic plough types just described are not exclusive to Egypt. We have already seen that plough type II has a wide diffusion in North Africa and the Middle East. It may also exist in Tibit, if the drawings reproduced by Ratzel [1] are true. But already in Tibet we see another

[1] Ratzel, Vol. III, p. 384.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE I]

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(a) — Type I. Split handle. — Straight beamed Plough.

(b) — Type II. Single handle. — Curved beamed Plough.

[END PLATE II]

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(a) — Type III. Single handle. — Straight beamed Plough.

(b) — Type IV. Right-angled double handle Plough.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

[END PLATE III]

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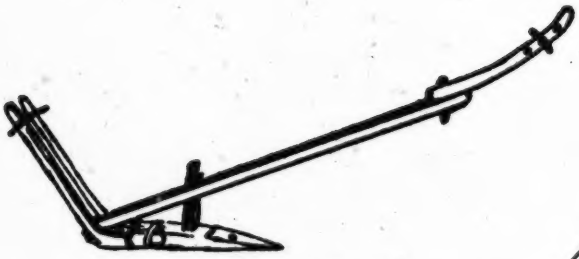
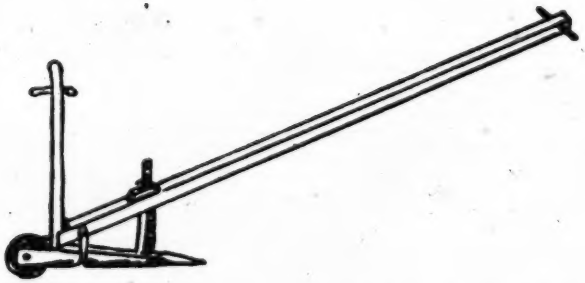


(a) — Type V. Obtuse angled double handle Plough.



(b) — Type VII. Single handle. — Straight beamed and wheeled Plough (Bilbies).

[END PLATE IV]

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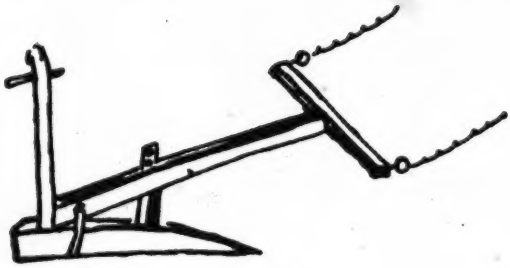
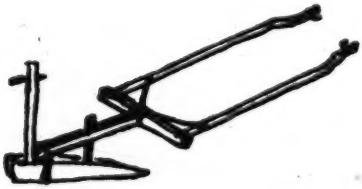


(a) Bilbies.

(b) Kamshush (after Winkler).



(c) After S. M. Behiery.

Type VI. Single handle. — Straight and short beamed Plough (Garden type).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

80.

Caution.

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Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazūl,
wirḫi ḍalāl šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

1. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

[834]
[184]
[291]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *harme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[1169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[788] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
776 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[778] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

abode. The corpse-washer goes to work with the utmost 764
care; he washes the body up and down, repeatedly cleaning out all external openings, including the nose and ears, and [767]
stops them with cotton; cotton is placed even between the toes and fingers and under the armpits. After the body is dried with equal care it is enveloped in the linen cloth, which has meantime been sewed together, and in such a way that no part of the dead is now visible. It is then laid on a bier without a coffin (it is only the Christians that hastily put a [184]
coffin together), and a green or red pall is spread over it. After a benediction has been said over it in the mosque, it is carried to the graveyard.

Hither the dead are borne at a rapid pace, those at least that were Mohammedans. With a haste and hurry that nothing can check the funeral procession rolls along, amid the murmur of *la ilah ill allah*, in order to carry the bier from the city of the living to the city of the dead. The advanced guard is formed by some blind and poor people and petty scribes, perhaps also some boys as a kind of choristers, and some flag-bearers. The bier is borne by four men, friends of the deceased, who are relieved by others of his friends, and thus the rapid march does not meet with the slightest interruption. A long procession of mourners and sympathizers follows, all in their ordinary working-day blouses, the relatives in the oldest and filthiest possible. Several portly well-to-do gentlemen pant behind, or have got themselves mounted upon trotting asses. By the side or at the end of the procession follows the wailing chorus of women, [834]
who on this day show remarkably little of their usual strictness in veiling themselves.

Having reached its destination, the corpse, wrapped only in its white shroud, is taken from the bier and let down without a coffin into a perpendicular excavation. During this proceeding, if the corpse is that of a female her former street mantle is held spread out over her in order to keep off longing glances—under such circumstances little to be expected. It is not the perpendicular excavation, however, that receives the dead body, which, being protected by no

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 162
women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is ob- 585
vious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the 581
women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her 164
husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, 562
and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own 836
affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition ro- 521
quires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They [832]
tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life 581
utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They 833
revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less 837
by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately 548
to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means. 562

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah 562
woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has 581
borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children 185
above everything else. To the wife they mean social pres- 593
tige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of 163
polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her 593
wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A 562
fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 578 754

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the 271
inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new 312
waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tîg, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn.

The creation of model villages has been more tempting 361
to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago 185
established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as 654
examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest.

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

361
185 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can
654 penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is 183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- 185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe 183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, 185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").
As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the 166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside 162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary 166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other 184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century 178
ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an un- 511
doubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a 735
dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave.

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, [171]
Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements.

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is 735
physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources 185
and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit.

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" (71).

In this low standard of living we must also include moral 511
poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 735

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah, but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (**). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 748 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

provided these show real cordiality and interest and have 183
come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 185

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, 748
to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism.

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the '*ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to [538] educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work.

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and [21] spiritual help : material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes : spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism .... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity."

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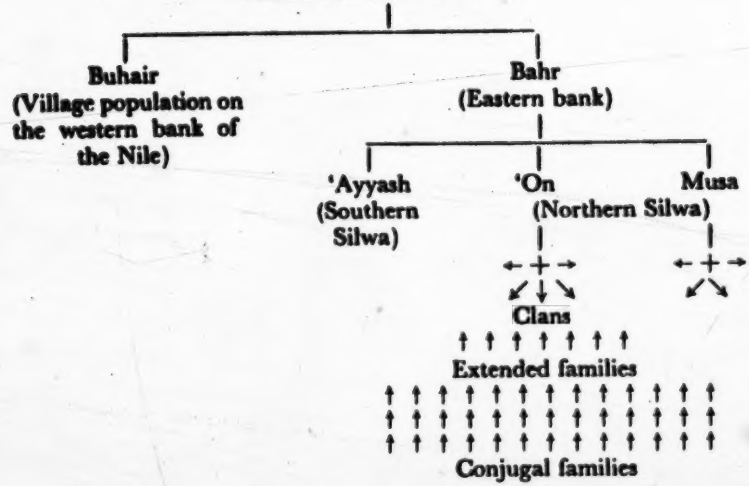
1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself
621 with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the
619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

THE G'AFRA DESCENT TREE



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the
186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having
613 a name for hospitality, or for scholarship and piety. Pride of clan is linked
616 with activities in the guest house, or co-operation in digging a well. Pride in one's section is revealed on communal celebrations especially during the
186 celebration of the Prophet's birthday; each section proclaiming that it has carried it out in a more spectacular manner as each usually has its 'marquee' for listening to the recital of Koran and mawals (popular songs). At
619 the level of the G'afra as such, the sense of pride reveals itself in their holy
186

[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardised details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 25.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

F
144 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption
174 of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat
175 similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

C
F
144 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns,
779 where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs
186 and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F
142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken
186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate
186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation
579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered
186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried
682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the
609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the
579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the
577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live (57).

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171] 64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443] 186 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them. 533 [114]

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they 461 533 [186]

[1]) According to Maḥmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women. [887]

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

54.

Mecca and Egypt.

539x
186

Banter on the desolate landscape of the holy place, compared with home, the beautiful, fruitful valley of the Nile.

Ya ulād Mikke, iš ḥal wādîkum?
Wādîne aḥsan min wādîkum,
lūla-n-nabi ma kunna neǧîkum!

Ye sons of Mecca, how is your valley?
Our valley is more beautiful than your valley.
Were it not for the Prophet's sake, we should not have come to you.

The first two verses, referring however to Damiette instead of Mecca, are to be found in a song in J. H. Churi's Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853 p. 317 (reprinted by Buecher in Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 434).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs". 539 563 186 [221] [231]

Ma 'ultē-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until later. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems. [812]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

x534

One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimāl,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fidha-š-šimāl.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

96.

539x

An Elixir.

"If thou hadst thy happiness to buy at the cost of people's respect, the treasures revealed would carry thee through it all."

Ḥaiya, yabnê 'ammi,
wiš-balāk bil-ṛarām?
Lō šuft nchūdi,
rummān 'ala 'ūdi,
5 *la-tmūt yahūdi*
wa-la 'alēkšê malām.
Lō šuft el-ḥala'
ſuidni bara',
la-tšīl bil-ṛala'
10 *wa-la 'alēkšê malām.*

Up, cousin!
Why art thou so cast down with grief?
If thou couldst see my breasts,
Like pomegranates on my body,
5 Thou mightest die like a Jew,
Without being open to blame!

[826]
[186]

x539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most
[582] natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnê 'ammi = "cousin"
[605] (masc.) and bintê 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 8.

● [186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris
[461] from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At
[857] our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the
[681] men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

108.

At the Garden-Door.

539x
832

The friend of a youth advises him as to how he may approach a certain rich and beautiful girl (1—6). The youth himself is also rich (ll. 9—10). The girl is from the maṛrib ("the west", that is to say, the coast-land of North Africa other than Egypt), where the women are noted for their beauty, as are the men for their sagacity. Ll. 7—13 contain narration by the girl. The song was a favorite of our workmen and often sung.

[186]

'Ala bāb il-genēne
windah: Ya gamāl!
Tiṭla'-lak ṣabīye
bēḍa maṛrabīye
5 *bir-ra'abe-ṭ-ṭarīye*
wil-lāli ṛar'ān.

Ḍarab el-bāb bi-īdo,
sammaḥni 'aṣīdo,
'ašara min 'abīdo
10 *tuḍrub bir-ruṭān.*
Daḫalna el-genēne,
be'na wištarēne
we-ḥammalna eg-gimāl.

[p. 122 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

116.

Christian and Moslem.

A Mohammedan woman has thrown herself away on a Coptic goldsmith. The word nuṣrāni, Christian, always has an odious sound to the Moslem; for this reason the woman thinks she has claim to valuable gifts from her lover.

Ramāni-l-ṛarām, ramāni
taḥtê šibbāk en-nuṣrāni.
Ma 'ultê-lak, ya-m'allim Mūse?
Du" lil-kirdān 'arūse!
5 *Muslime we-'ašī'et nuṣrāni!*

Love has smitten me, smitten me
Under the Christian's window.
Did I not tell thee, Master Mūsa?
"Fasten a pendant to my necklace!"
5 I, a Moslem, in love with a Christian!

3. Have I not had to ask you once before for the ornament?
Me'allim, master, literally: teacher, is a title given to all Copts, with the exception of the poorest classes.

4. 'arūse is an ornament, which hangs zē nīšān = like an order, on the necklace.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma 'ultê-lak, ya ma 'ultê-lak 593
winte lissa fi-'angetak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šar'īye,
5 *yaḥdūk bilād el-ṛarbīye,*
tiṣbaḥ 'adīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak 'ala-l-mi'dāf rāiḥ
teṭalla' er-raml es-sāiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Shar'īye,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

7

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113

See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library,

F [192]

63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171]

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 1443] 186

68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346]

69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191

72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

but in fact it has been influenced considerably both by the colloquial and by modern European languages. Conservatives attempt to maintain, and reformers to narrow, the wide gap which still remains. 191

73. MODERN EGYPT, by the Earl of Cromer : Macmillan, London, 1908. The second of the two volumes deals with the social condition of Egypt. 113

74. THE BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, by Ibrahim Rashad, Director of the Department of Co-operation in the Ministry of Agriculture : Government Press, Cairo, 1935 (in Arabic). The second of the two volumes deals with Egyptian practice.

75. See an excellent study in Arabic by Dr Sayyid Karim in the review EL-IMARA (*Architecture*), No. 11 for 1941, pp. 51-64 : VILLAGE REFORM : THE MODEL OR THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE ?

76. 'Successive Governments have spent L.E.14,000,000 to pay off debts on property, that is to say to save the big landowners, who do not number above 13,000. This means that these privileged persons have received an average of L.E. 1,000 each, which has been paid out by the Treasury on the pretext of maintaining agricultural prosperity. [746 735]

'The Government has this year allotted L.E. 17,000 to the establishment of social centres. This means that each poor fellah is to have half a piastre. If we add to this the expense of supplying drinking-water and free medical treatment, the sum set aside for the poor by the Government is no more than a few piastres a head.' (AL-INZAR, Minia, 3.3.1941)

77. Draft Budget for 1941-2, in the Annals of the Chamber of Deputies for April 1941.

See also: Ibnet ish-Shaty': THE QUESTION OF THE FELLAH : THE REFORM OF VILLAGE EDUCATION, DEFECTS IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, pp. 112-131.

Taha Bey Hussein : THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN EGYPT (1938), Vol. II, pp. 94-125 on ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Jacques Tagher : THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT (1942), pp. 59-63.

(The last three are all in Arabic.)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

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C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

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4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḥ*, plural of *gōḥa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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114 The reader should note that all the vowels in
[194] the transliteration have the sounds of Italian or continental vowels.

[192] The word, fellāḥ, which has been translated: "peasant", means literally: plowman.

For the sake of preserving the play on words, so characteristic of the Arabic, it has sometimes been necessary to translate literally, where, in order to be perfectly intelligible, a foot-note was essential. (Numbers 34—35, "finished".)

Owing to the differences in our occidental, living arrangements, it has been difficult, in some instances, to preserve the comparisons which are more easily rendered in the German.

The task herewith completed, has given me unusual pleasure, since it has acquainted me with many things in the life of the people, which, during a winter in Egypt, entirely escaped me. I can only hope that the translation may render the same service to travelers in Egypt, as well as to all lovers of folk-lore.

— Frances Hart Breasted.

Gross Lichterfelde, July 18, 1904.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

2.

Trust in Allah.

×539 *Ya ʿēni, wel-miʿēn Alla*
wes-Seiyide u-rigāl Alla;
we-ramēt el-ḥiml ʿalēk, yalla.

Thou, mine eye, Allah is the helper
And the Lady and the men of Allah;
And on thee have I cast the burden, O Allah!

[192] 1. "Mine eye" is a frequent term of affection, equivalent to "my darling". Here, perhaps, the father is speaking to the son.

2. The "Lady" is the lady Zēnab, the Prophet's grand-
[792] daughter, whose greatly esteemed mosque lies in south Cairo. The "men of Allah" are the saints (shêkhs), whose graves lie scattered throughout the land.

3.

Exhortation to Prayer.

[782] *Ya ʾalbi, ṣalli wimdaḥ Moḥammed*
illi ṣalāto manaʿit guhannim.

Pray, my heart, and praise Moḥammed,
Whose prayer has put away hell.

2. From pious Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afârit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullê ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gûrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[192] [776] [362] [172]

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

[241] [262]

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

×539 461 [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballaṣ aḫḍar u-melān!
Ya giḏ'ān, iḏ'u rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

1. Aḫḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray [192] (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḫḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē higgi, balāš dalā'a;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafā'a.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

56.

Self Importance.

539* 578

Addressed to a wretched, dirty fellow who is something of a braggart. He looks like a smutty, black baking-tin, but acts as if he were of great importance.

Alla ʿaṣ-ṣāg el-hindi,
fellāḥ we-ʿāmilš gindi!

Allah! look at the fine baking-tin!
Only a peasant and would play the soldier!

1. Literally: "Indian baking-tin" The adjective "(East) Indian" is used frequently with stuffs as an equivalent for "excellent". [177] [192]

2. One must not have in mind the tame, modern Egyptian military, but rather the Turkish soldiers of former times. Compare No. 55.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

58.

Lamentations of a Builder.

539x
343

A builder, having undertaken to build a pretentious bath, sits before the unsuccessful edifice and ridicules his work and himself.

Ḥammām ya-skanderāni,
ḥammām, šuṛlak barrāni!
ḥammām, wan-illi banēto,
ḥammām, u-ma ḥaddē ṛēri.

Thou Alexandrian bath!
O bath, how wretchedly thou art made!
O bath, and it was made by me,
O bath, and nobody but myself!

2. According to Maḥmūd, barrāni, "from abroad", is used here in the same sense as when applied to money, meaning "false" or "under value". Once, wishing to tell one of our men that the small coin of Egypt is coined in Berlin, I began thus: "All your Egyptian money is from abroad (barrāni)". He took fright and interrupted me with the words: "No, thou jokest, it is full value". [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

539x
961

Bil-amān, ya-lummē,
wa-la tuḍrub aiye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana-smi Lēle?
5 *Rummān ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭarah eg-genēne.
Ana ma'ak 'and el-'āḍi
fi-haza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe, [926]
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun. [192] [551]

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'Āḍi (QAdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage. [693]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

81.

Wind and Love.

539x 832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The man is a watchman (ṣafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself. [192]

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7. [342]

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.] [114]

'Ali 'Elēwe bana-lo fil-gibal iḫsas,
biddo yeḥāš el-hawa.
Hāwa el-hawa yinḥāš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
5 *weš-šōk lam yindas,*
wil-bint lam tinḫiṭib,
illa-blammet nas.

'Ali 'Elēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114.

*539 832 Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-'aṭīfe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar 'ala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn waḥḥadu Alla!*

[292] "Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
[301] "I have put on the bracelets, sir,
[304] And the green tatooing is on my hand!
[779] 5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Ta'alâ-li, ya wad, ta'alâ-li,
taḥtē sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yûḥ!). [192]

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[p.240 is blank]

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114 think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣîr. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my inform-
115 ants was a Būṣîri (man of Abūṣîr), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa''āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa''āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhîm es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old
124 rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All
115 the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qāf, which in this vicinity is either [104] not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus, [194] I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasya near Beni-Suēf.

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once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

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114 [194] The reader should note that all the vowels in the transliteration have the sounds of Italian or continental vowels.

[192] The word, fellāḥ, which has been translated: "peasant", means literally: plowman.

For the sake of preserving the play on words, so characteristic of the Arabic, it has sometimes been necessary to translate literally, where, in order to be perfectly intelligible, a foot-note was essential. (Numbers 34—35, "finished".)

Owing to the differences in our occidental, living arrangements, it has been difficult, in some instances, to preserve the comparisons which are more easily rendered in the German.

The task herewith completed, has given me unusual pleasure, since it has acquainted me with many things in the life of the people, which, during a winter in Egypt, entirely escaped me. I can only hope that the translation may render the same service to travelers in Egypt, as well as to all lovers of folk-lore.

Frances Hart Breasted.

Gross Lichterfelde, July 18, 1904.

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Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fac, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have [988] more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of [195] the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1] 513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865 is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858 pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865 mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593 is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152 sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [?151] two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865 tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593 old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152 that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg ?55 fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154] a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154] children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [534] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

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571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.[1]

The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the 156 constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations. [500] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.[2] The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.[3]

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.[4]

[1] This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

[2] With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand [195] a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Psychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284–302.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

[4] Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

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159 and asked them to go away. But when the man was out of sight, the two boys returned to resume their fight. When one of them started to cry, the other fled, for if he waited, the father of the former boy would have caught him and struck him.

5. When the oder boy found the ball with his brother, he snatched it from him; the younger boy started to cry. When the mother asked the oder boy to give it back to his brother, he did. But when the mother went out, the older boy took the ball again and ran outside the house with it, looking proud and happy. The other boys asked him to show it to them and play together with it. When hereturned home his mother spat in his face for taking the ball from his brother. He said that he did not take it, but it was given to him by his brother, who did not want it any more. Then the mother told him that he was a liar and asked him to hand the ball back to his brother.
6. When the two boys talked secretly, one of them warned the other against their enemy. They decided not to talk or sit with him or show him anything they had.
7. He screamed, saying that he felt some people trampling over him, and on asking them who they were, they refused to answer him. Then he shouted to be rescued: 'Oh, the One (Yawahid)' (a way of imploring God when in a state of distress, or when frightened, especally used in the village to summon other people for help, who on hearing such a cry, would immediately go to see what had happened).
8. He prayed for gold, clothes, shoes and socks.
9. He wants togrow up to farm and grow corn and go to Cairo. He also wants to get married. He does not want to become an old man with a bent back who is going to die.

C. *Age fourteen:*

1. The boy is angry because the other boys do not play with him.
2. He cursed his father and mother and thus made them angry. They thrashed him, and when he cried they sent him outside the house 'for the dogs to eat him'.
3. When the boy broke the jars, he was never sent again to fetch water, and his sister had to do it instead.
4. He interfered between the two boys, gave each a slap on the face and cursed their fathers.
5. The older boy took the ball from his younger brother to play with it himself. The father came and thrashed the older boy and rebuked him for being jealous of his younger brother.
6. He showed the other boy a place where gold was hidden. After collecting the gold, they sold it and with the money bought clothes, cars and bicycles.
7. He was afraid that they might be thieves who would beat him,

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

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5 *Rāḥet tekubbê-trabha* 539x
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha. 527
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd 821
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyūṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyūṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

88.

Hope Deferred . . . .

539x
832

The lover awaits impatiently an opportunity to join his sweetheart. He compares himself with a ship, which, although ready to set out, is obliged to lie waiting at anchor. "I have waited for two years, and now I give up hope. Therefore let us depart!" — The song was usually combined with No. 131.

El-lēl, el-lēl, ya ḥilli!
Ya ma ṭal el-lēl 'ala ḥilli!
El-ḥill ya mā-hu 'āsi!
u-širibt el-kās, ya nāsi,
5 *sanatēn wana 'al-barr rāsi.*
niḥdir u-ngurr el-merāsi!

The night, the night, my loved one!
O, how long the night was for me because of my loved one!
O, how hard is the loved one!
I have drunk the cup (of sorrow) ye people,
5 For two years whilst I lay at anchor by the shore.
Now we are ready, let us weigh anchor!

4. The explanation: "cup of sorrow" is Mahmūds.
5. Two years, an expression for a long time, is used also in No. 130, l. 2. [195]

[P.94 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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At the garden-door
Call: "O Beauty!"
Then a maiden will come out to thee,
A fair one, from the marrib,
5 With the soft neck,
On which the (heavy) pearls lie sunken.

He struck the door with his hand,
And let me hear his song.
Ten of his black slaves
10 Gabbled together.
We entered the garden,
[195] Sold and bought
And loaded the camels.

12. 13 are an euphemism.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

212 This improvement is also obvious in Silwa itself: ten years ago there were two public scribes in the village to whom people would resort for letter-writing or making formal complaints, but they have had to close their establishment on not finding enough customers. The spread of literacy in Egypt has generally been made more difficult because of the difference between the colloquial and the classical Arabic, which is taught in schools. The relation of the former to the latter is almost like that of [197] Swiss German to High German. Moreover, some reformers maintain that it takes too long with the present script for the child to become sufficiently literate, and this difficulty has prompted some Egyptian scholars to advocate a Latin script instead of the present Arab script.[1] The numerous rules of inflection, changing vowels and consonants, and the diacritical marks attached to the words according to meaning, make correct reading a tiresome task. It has often been said, and not without some measure of justification, that in European languages, one has to read in order to understand, while in Arabic, one has to understand in order to read.

212 In Silwa, however, though people are increasingly attaching more
871 importance to the ability to read and write, this instrument cannot be considered as a vital motivating force in their lives. The villagers' traditions can be mainly communicated orally, with a few literate persons on whom would devolve the responsibility of communicating the cultural and religious aspects requiring literacy. It is not surprising, then, that some of the villagers, especially most women, who had learnt reading and writing at a compulsory school, have almost relapsed into illiteracy. The remoteness and relative isolation of the village, along with the poverty in cultural influences such as newspapers, books, and other suitable reading [004] material, explain to a great extent this phenomenon. The degree of literacy could be better assessed, however, from the kind of literature that is read in the village, and from the extent to which the reading ability is utilized. There are hardly any books in the village, except those few related to religious matters in one way or another. The following is a list of all the books which are acquired and read by the villagers:

Books on Jurisprudence (fikh): *Matn Assafti, al-Ishmawi, Sherh abu-al Hasan, matn Addardiri, Risalat Ibn abi-Zaid al-Kairawani, Azzurkani.*

Burdat-al-Busiri (The Mantle Ode), a hymn in praise of the Prophet.

Dalail al-Khairat. A book read usually for propitiation, and in petitions to God.

Matn al-Jawhara in Diriniy (Tawheed—Unity of God).

Manakib Assalihen (The Virtue of Pious Men).

Manakib al-Hassan wal-Hussain (The Virtues of the Prophet's Cousins).

Manakib Assayid al-Badawi.

Kasaid ahl Atterik (Poems of the Mystics).

Certain books from which texts of charms are copied.

Mawlid al-Manawi (Prophet's Life-story).

[1] A. F. Fahmy, *Latin Script for the Writing of Arabic* (Arabic), Cairo, 1944.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix Six

SOME PROVERBS CURRENT IN THE VILLAGE

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BESIDES those proverbs mentioned in the main text of the thesis the following are specimens of proverbs in the village dialect. It is to be noted here that some of the Prophet's sayings as well as some Koranic statements are occasionally quoted in a proverbial sense, especially by literate people. For a compendium of Arabic proverbs, see J. L. Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, London, 1930; and for the colloquial Egyptian proverbs, especially in towns and cities, see M. Taimour, *al-Amthal al-'Amia* (Colloquial Proverbs), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic).

Alli ma 'indush ma yilzamush.
He who has not, need not give.

Shatlak wala yidurrak.
What you plant shall never harm you.

Walad batny yiaraf ratny.
The son of my womb knows my language (lingo).

Nas ti'akkir wi nas tseed.
Some disturb the waters, others fish in them.

Kul shai giamah wi naseeb.
Everything is destined and is thus one's lot.

Alli yimil gantara lazim yithammal addoas.
He who makes a bridge of himself must bear the treading. (Said about a person who assumes the role of leadership with its concomitant responsibilities.)

'Ind ashadaid t'uraf al ikhwan (class. Arabic).
Adversities are the test of brothers (or friends).

Khisla fi al abai yarithuha al abnai (class. Arabic).
A trait in the fathers is inherited by their sons.

Addonia himal.
Life is burdensome.

Addahab yihtaj li annukhal.
Gold requires the bran (wherein it can be hidden and preserved). (In other words the leaders of people need the support of the lod and the less distinguished of their people.)

/88 cont'd/ 755 171

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion. [534]

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [196] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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*407 a wooden supporter is put next to the pin. This is naturally not the case in type II where the curve of the beam keeps it standing upwards. In type I this supporter is also lacking.

GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS AND INTERRELATIONS FROM PHILOLOGICAL EVIDENCES

● 197 184 *407 It is obvious from both the list of appellations of different parts of the plough and maps on figures 1 and 2, that certain differences in naming the parts of the plough do exist in Egypt. These differences, apart from their importance to the study of dialects in Egypt, reveal some definite geographic regions the boundaries of which are supported by well known cultural elements and historical facts. If these regions which are detected from the study of plough are not totaly new, there is no doubt that their existence is reinforced by new evidences.

Region One: The Delta. The homogeneity of terminology in the Delta is striking. It is only on maps (c) and (d) of fig. 1 that we find a certain specialization in naming the handle and beam of the plough in Eastern Delta. This area is the domain where plough types II, III, VI and VII prevail. The philological differentiation in this respect is deeply rooted in the technicalities of these plough types; they are all single handled, hence these handles deserve the name of « Rombe » spear in contradistinction to « Riesh » feathers which is applied to the split handle of type I. Because the beam of type II is curved, hence the term Ous – a bow or a curve. Though plough types III, VI and VII possess a straight beam, they are nevertheless called Ous. This is a fact which undeniably point that type II is of older age in the area, and furthermore gives an evidence that all these types are but off shoots of this type adjusted to the cultural milieu of Egypt as a whole (where the straight beam prevail): the beam changed but the old name persisted.

It is also observed that some appellations in the Delta do not belong to any arabic origin, but are derivations from the Greek or the Latin languages. Thus Winkler think that « Balanga » (– the pin of the plough)

7; Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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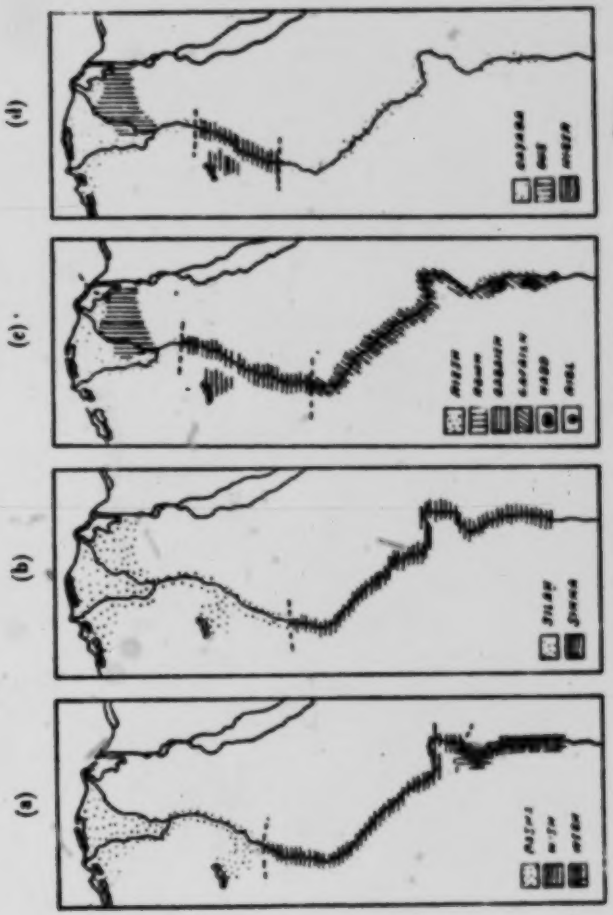

Fig. 1. Applications of Plough Parts.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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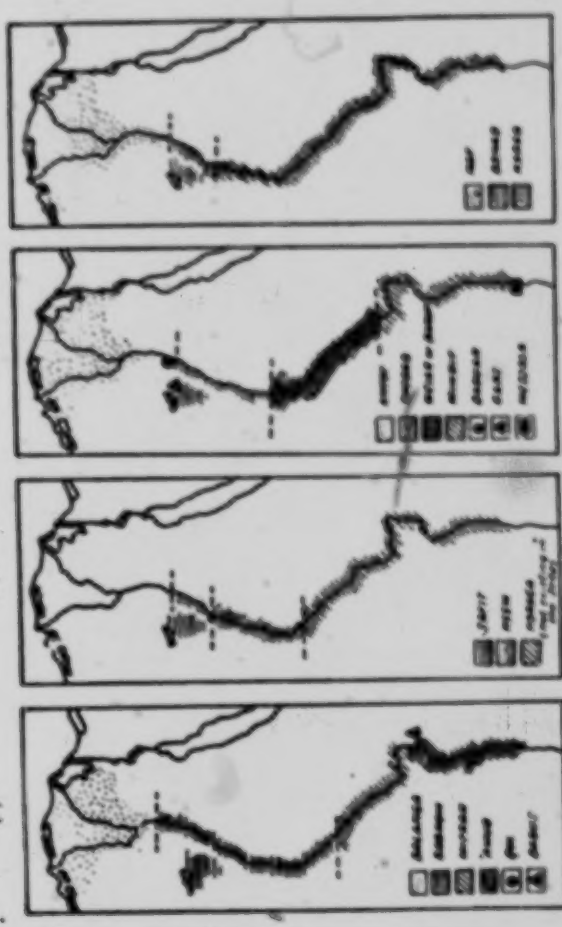

Fig. 6. Appearance of Plough Ports.

Fig. 6. Beam Extension. Cross Peg of Beam. Yoke.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

point to the Italian word Bilancia[1]. In this way could we seek the origin of the term «Bazha» (the base of the plough) to such origins? In addition to these foreign terms there are arabic names, e. g., «Sikha» blade or share, «Rysha» — feathers, «Rumha» spear, while the words «Antoto» and «Nafo» may belong to the Coptic or ultimately to the Egyptian languages. In this way we may see that the Delta, though homogeneous, reveal three segmented linguistic and cultural layers: the Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, and the Arabic. This conclusion, supported by historical records, has its reasoning in the geographical situation of the Delta as the northern limits of the Egyptian Nile Valley, as the area facing the Mediterranean, and lastly as the area exposed to Arabia. 197 ● 184 407*

If the Delta is established as one region, we can further divine it in two sub-regions. Leaning on the arguments stated above, the Eastern Delta would stand alone as a sub-region, while the other parts of the Delta would constitute the second sub-region. There is no part of the Delta other than its East which received so many human and cultural elements from the Middle-East and Arabia and it happens that that part, in what concerns the plough, is remarkably different in terminology and technique. This area, where type II is at home, did not only account for the several offshoots of plough forms (types III, VI, VII) but also affected the manner in which the ploughman controls his plough. All over the Delta and Middle Egypt the ploughman marches beside his plough where a split handle or a double handle is used. This, as Winkler rightly pointed out[2] is due to the influence of plough Type II, where the ploughman always walk to the left of the plough. In the same source, Winkler claims that this habit of going beside the plough in itself is an evidence of the prior spread of plough II all over the Delta and Middle Egypt[3]. But we must not build a whole theory upon one factor. It is true, as we shall see below, that a curved beamed plough was discovered in Fayum dating to the Roman Period, but this plough was not single 407* 184 [197] [241]

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[1] Winkler, H. A., 1936, p. 164.
[2] Winkler, 1936, pp. 148, 150.
[3] Winkler, 1936, pp. 150, 163.

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

* 407 184 handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the ploughand all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

● 197 184 * 407 *Region Two :* Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e. g.. « Wish » and « Wegh » or « Wijh » — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien » or « Gafaien » (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish » for the base, « Sikka » for the share, « Gabaien » for the handles, « Gasaba » for the beam, « Koraga » for the beam extension, and « Karab » for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences [197] from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Bahrif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (*c*) of fig. 1 and map (*c*) of fig. 2. On map (*c*) fig. 1 we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Hadd [114] is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities -

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Kelh and Benhan were given this terminology by Winkler [9]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennasr, Abu Ibny, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramadi South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of «Wegho» and «Wijho», for the base, «'Amud» instead of «Miftah» for the pin, and «Mindel» instead of «Weira» or «Baruf» for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North.

Region Three: Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area: a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide it to three sub-regions: Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity: the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolized in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have «Higro» for beam, «Ragroma» for pin, «Saflit» for the beam extension, «Shaddab» for the cross peg of the beam extension, and «Danad» for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins.

[9] Winkler, 1936, p. 253.

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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either in the Fayum Coptic or with a mixture of Greek origins, for we know that Fayum was once one of the important centers of the Greek Ptolomies.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EGYPTIAN PLOUGH

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It is a well established fact that the first recorded form of plough is found on the monuments of Ancient Egypt. Many drawings from the Old and the New Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt can give us a picture relevant to question of the evolution of the plough. There is also a coloured wooden figure of the plough which belong to the 11th or the 12th dynasty kept in the British Museum, and many original ploughs were found near Fayum which belong to the Greek and Roman periods of the history of Egypt, and which are kept in the different Museums of the world, e.g. Cairo and Berlin. All these examples of the plough covering a very long time span can be used as a sound basis for the study of the history of the present Egyptian plough, if we add to it the description of the plough in the 18th century A. D., recorded by Norden [6], and by the scientists of the French Expedition to Egypt [7].

In an unpublished report in the Agricultural Museum of Cairo, a short note is written on the subject of the ancient Egyptian plough. Extracts from the note runs as follows :

> « The ancient Egyptian traditions allodge that the Egyptians are indebted to Osiris, God of Plants in the Egyptian Pantheon, for the knowledge of the plough. Evidences from early drawings prove that the plough in its original form was worked only by man, and it was only drawn by oxen in the drawings of Meidum, i.e., begining from the third Dynasty. In that form the plough had only one wooden share for ploughing the soft soils ; and had a double wooden share covered by a sheet of bronze to plough harder soils.... The plough was called in the Egyptian language SIKKA. »

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[6] See references under Norden.
[7] See references under Girard.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellanin MR13

In this note it is interesting to see that before the third Dynasty (the beginning of this Dynasty is attributed by Erman to be about 2900 B.C.)[7] the Egyptians used hoes to break the soil, or at least that is what one can understand from the phrase « the plough in its original form was worked only by mans. Drawings of hoes used to break the soil came to us from the remains of the first Dynasty[8]. The plough in its early form, and throughout the Old Kingdom, was composed of a wooden share to which two short handles were fixed from the rear end of the share, while a long beam was fixed to it from the center. The beam ended with a yoke which was at that time attached to the horns of the drawing oxen. In the Middle Kingdom there was no development to this plough, but

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> ... in the New Kingdom we see that the handles became longer, and hand grips were added to the handles. We also see that the yoke was replaced by another type which is not attached to the horns, but which rests on neck of the animal ... this method was taken over from the method of saddling the horse. ... »[9].

Of special interest in the note of the Agricultural Museum of Cairo cited above, is the appellation of the plough in Ancient Egyptian. Sikka as the name of the plough was conserved till now in Arabic Egyptian, and is used to denote the share of the plough in Upper Egypt[10]. Sikka as the name of the plough in Ancient Egypt may have been supplemented by or was used along with another name :

[197]

> « ... The name of a plough was HEBI; ploughed land appears to have been ART, a word still tagged in the Arabic HART... »[11].

Wilkinson states that the Ancient Egyptianse observed by Diodorus, used hoes extensively, but on occasions used light ploughs which traced slight furrows, while other peasants followed the plough with hoes to

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[7] Erman, p. 08.
[8] Erman, p. 496, footnote 4.
[9] Erman, pp. 498-497. Also see plate 8 of this article.
[10] See list of appellations given in this article.
[11] Wilkinson, Vol. II, p. 393.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Appellations Regionally Used to Different Parts of the Native Plough in Egypt.

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Place of Observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	Handle grip	Beam
Eastern Delta :						
Quantara West (•)	Bazha	Silah	Romh		Maqhad	Ous
Geneneia (•) (:)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Bacout (3) (:)	•	•	•	—		Asaba
Nab (3)	•	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Gos
Ibrahimia (•)				Gafiez	•	•
'Ezbet-Mahrez (•)				•	•	•
Billiaw (•)	•	•	•	Afiez	Abda	Ous
Billiaw (3)				—	•	•
Ibrahimia (•) (-)					Gabda	Gos
'Ezbet-Mahrez (•) ( )				—	•	•
Billiaw (•) ( )	•	•	•		Abda	Ous
Billiaw (3) ( )						
Billiaw (•) (:)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Billiaw (•) (:)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Central Delta :						
Birada (•)	•	•	Riesh	—	Yadd	Asaba
Birada (•) (:)	—	•	•	—	•	—
Zefta (•)	Bazha	•	Romh	—	Gabda	Asaba
Sa'ad Pacha (•) ( )	•	•	•	—	•	Ous
Shoney (•)	•	•	Riesh	—	Iryd	Asaba
Mehalla (•)	•	•	Raiesh	—	'Oukza	•
Kamshish (3)	•	•	•	—	Rimh	•
Kamshish (3) (:)	•	Lisan el 'asfur	•	—	•	Ous(— —)
Western Delta :						
Sonbar (3)	•	Silah	Riesh	—	—	Gaashi
Setma (•)	•	•	•	—	'Oukza	Asaba
Middle Egypt :						
Tamma (3) (:)	•	•	•	—	Abda	Asaba
'Ysaf (•) (:)	•	•	Gabaiea		•	Hagg
Fidimin (3) (:)	•	•	•	—	—	•
Sanero (•) (:)	•	•	•	—	Mazaad	•
Zeid (•) (:)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Maz'arie (3) (:)	•	•	•	—	'Uhad	•
Edab'ia (•) ( )	Wish	•	•	—	Gabda	Gasaba
Beni Mazar (•) (:)	•	•	•	—	•	•
Gebaiea (3) (:)	•	Sikka	•	—	•	•
Shoeba (•) (:)	•	Silah	•	—	•	•

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron handle	handle grip	Beam
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Wish	Sikke	Gafaien	Tog	Gabeja	Gaqaba
Garf Serban (•) (+)	•	•	•		•	•
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	•	•	Dafaien	Dibel	Yadd	•
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	Dog	Gabeja	•
El-'Eahi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Tog	Babba	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	Dabba	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	Gabeja	•
Esnaberiat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	Dibel	•	•
Harragia (•) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	Wagh	•	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Wish	•	•	•	Maghaj	•
Kelh (3) (+)	Wigh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Ramedi South (1) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	•	•	•
Benhan (3) (+)	Wagh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Baharif (3) (+)	Sikke	•	Rigil	•	Yadd	
Palestine :						
Southern area (•) ( ) (+)	Arjiya	Hasoun	Romin		Hamama	Kaw'
Libya :						
Tripoli (•) ( ) (+)	El-Layta	Sikka	Selaqina	—	Qarraqa	Raqaba

(1) Ploughs observed by the author.
(•) Ploughs described by some students of the author (faculty of Arts, Ain-Shams Univ.).
(3) Ploughs described by H. A. Winkler pp. 153-158 (see references below).
(+) Double handle plough.
(=) Curved beam plough.
(+) One animal plough (usually garden plough).
(++) Wheeled plough (usually used in sandy areas).
(+) Wheeled plough (usually for vegetables).
(— —) The first part of the beam, which is attached to the share is called Wasle, while the forked fore part of the beam is called Arish, and the whole is called Oas, see Winkler, H. A., p. 154.

[241]

Transcription : ء ' | ج j | ح h | خ kh | ص s | ض Sh | ط t | ظ z | ع ' | غ gh | ق q | ك k | ل l | م m | ن n | ه h | و w | ي y | ة t | ى a

[104]

This Sign ¯ on any vowel means elongation of the vowel.

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Place of observation	Fastener; base with beam	Pin	Pin supporter	Beam Extension	Fastener; beam with beam extension	cross peg of beam or beam extension
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (s)	Ṭo'	Balanga	—	—	—	Bantot
Geneinia (s) (+)	•	•	—	—	—	Lantot
Bussat (3) (+)	Ṭog	•	—	—	—	Antot
Nub (3)	—	•	Shinbab	—	—	Bantot
Ibrahimia (s)	Gafiez	•	•	—	—	•
'Ezbet-Maher (s)	•	•	•	—	—	•
Bilbeis (s)	Alez	•	—	—	—	•
Bilbeis (3)	Ṭog	•	Faṭs	—	—	•
Ibrahimia (s) (—)	—	•	—	Waqla	Shamber	•
'Ezbet-Maher (s) (=)	—	•	—	•	•	•
Bilbeis (s) (—)	—	•	—	•	•	•
Bilbeis (3) ( )	—	•	—	•	—	•
Bilbeis (s) (+)	—	•	—	—	—	—
Bilbeis (s) (+)	—	•	—	—	—	Bantot
Central Delta :						
Birala (s)	Ṭo'	•	—	—	—	Antot
Birala (s) (+)	—		—	—	—	—
Zefta (s)	Ṭo'	Balanga	—	—	—	Antot
Sa'ad Pasha (s) (=)	—	•	—	Waqla	Shamber	•
Shoraj (s)	Ṭo'	•	—	—	—	•
Mishla (s)	•	•	—	Waqla	Shamber	•
Kamshish (3)	•	•	—	—	—	•
Kamshish (3) (+)	Balanga	•	—	—	—	—
Western Delta :						
Sankar (3)	Ṭog	•	—	—	—	•
Netma (s)	Ṭo'	•	—	—	—	•
Middle Egypt :						
Ṭammat (3) (+)	Ṭo'	Magrum	—	Waqla	Shadjab	—
'Ayat (s) (+)	Bagrum	Balanga	—	•	Shadjab	Dosar
Fidimin (3) (+)	Ṭo'	Bagrum	—	Sefiḥ	Gare	Gare
Sinero (s) (+)	Bagrum or Iyl	•	—	Sefiḥ	•	Shadjab

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Place of observation	Footner: beam with beam	Pin	Pin supporter	Beam Extension	Footner: beam with beam cub-mium	Cross peg of beam or beam extension
Zeid (o) (+)	Iyl	Bagytun	Mesnaid	Wadet-Etta'ab	Ta'ab	Shadduf
Men'aria (3) (+)	•	•	Masnad	Sullit	Shaddah	'a or wiri
Edab'iy (o) (+)	Mesmar	•	•	Hasm	Abu-Elgaytun	Shaddah
Beni Mazar (o) (+)	Tog	Balanga	—	•	Elgaytun	Shaddah
Gebayna (3) (+)	Gil	Mesnad	without a special name	•	Gayun	Shiddah
Shosha (o) (+)	Mesmar	Bagytun	Masnad	•	Abu-Elgaytun	Shiddah
Upper Egypt:						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Gil	•	•	•	•	'Aqbar
Garf Serhan (o) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	Gerreb	Badrum	•	Gerada	Rawf	Wori
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	Meftah	•	Gerage	Bazja	Weiar
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Gerage	Bashi	Rawf
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	Miftah	•	Kerugi	Gazja	Mindil
Abu Manaf (o) (+)	•	•	•	Kerage	Ijabar	•
Emaberat (o) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ijarragin (o) (+)	'Ogb	Dabbata	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammiri (o) (+)	•	'Amad	•	•	•	•
Nenajir (3) (+)	Gerreb	•	Ijabar	•	•	•
Kelh (3) (+)	•	Dul	Mesnad	•	•	•
Ramada South (o) (+)	•	'Amad	•	•	•	•
Bembun (3) (+)	•	•	•	—		•
Baharif (3) (+)	•	•	Gafir			Mesnada
Palestine:						
Southern area (o) ( )(+)	—	—	—			—
Libya:						
Tripoli (o) (—) (+)	—	—	—			—

7: Riad [illegible]C-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Rope connecting beam with yoke	Yoke	Outer peg of the yoke	Inner Peg of the yoke	Middle Peg of the yoke	Rope connecting yoke with animal
Eastern Delta :						
Qantara West (s)	Gird	Nal	Gunzla	Sohar'	Mowmar	Ijnnang
Gesemia (s)'(1)	•	•	Gunzla	•	•	Deshida
Bugeej (3) (1)	'ad	•	•	•	•	
Nab (3)	Gird	•	Deshida or gunzla	'Aqlur	'Aqlur	
Ibrahimia (s)	•	•	Gunzla	•	'Aqlur Wastani	Deshida
'Ezbet-Maher (s)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bilbeis (s)	'ad	•	Gunzla	•	•	Ijabbl
Bilbeis (3)	Gird	•	Gunzla	•	'Aqlur	
Ibrahimia (s) ( )	•	•	Gunzla	•	'Aqlur Wastani	Deshida
'Ezbet-Maher (s) (=)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bilbeis (s) ( )	'ad	•	Gunzla	•	'Aqlur	Ijabbl
Bilbeis (3) (=)	Gird	•	Gunzla	•	•	—
Bilbeis (s) ( )	'ad	•	Gunzla	—	—	Habbl
Bilbeis (s) (+)	•	•	•	•	'Aqlur	•
Central Delta :						
Biyala (s)	Gird	•	•	•	•	Deshida
Biyala (s) (-) (1)	Sabab	•	•	—	—	•
Zefta (s)	Gird	•	•	'Aqlur	'Aqlur	•
Sa'id Pasha (s) (=)	•	•	Ijnnang	•	'Aqlur Wastani	•
Shoney (s)	'ad	•	Mahna's	•	Bahara	•
Mishla (s)	Gird	•	Ijnnna's	•	Ba'lf	Mahna's
Kimshish (3)	'ad	•	Gunzla	•	'Aqlur	
Kimshish (3) (±)	—	•	•	—	—	—
Western Delta :						
Sankur (3)	'ad	•	Gunzli	'Aqlur	'Aqlur	—
Netma (s)	•	•	Ijnnna's	•	•	Mahna's
Middle Egypt :						
Tunnun (3) (+)	•	•	Gunzla	Gunzl	Mowmar	—
'Ayat (s) (+)	•	•	•	'Aqlur	•	Mahna's

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Place of observation	Rope connecting beam with yoke	Yoke	Outer Peg of the yoke	Inner Peg of the yoke	Middle Peg of the yoke	Rope connecting yoke with animal
Fidimin (3) (+)	'Id	Ḍanaḍ	Ounzin	Ounzif	Mummar	—
Sinnru (o) (+).	•	•	•	•	el-Maqsum	Maḥno'n
Zeid (o) (+).....	•	•	•	•	•	•
Man'urin (3) (+).....	Wire	•	•	•	no name	-
Ejlab'iy (1) (+)	•	Karub	Gunzin	Ṣuba'	Suba'	Maḥno'n
Beni Mazar (o) (+)	Gud	•	•	Habur	Ḥabur	Gunzin
Gebuna (3) (+)	•	•	•	Ṣuba'	Ṣuba'	—
Shuuba (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	Gunzin
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+).	Wire	•	Gule	Mummar	Mummar	—
Garf Sevḥan (o) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	Maḥno'n
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)...	•	•	•	—	•	Maḥnogo
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+).	•	•	Gile	Gile	•	•
El-'Eshi (3) (+)	•	•	•	'Aṣfur	•	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+) ...	•	•	Gille	Za'fur	Za'fur	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Elhawariat (1) (+).....	•	•	•	Sa'fur	Ṭa'fur	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harragia (o)(+)	•	•	•	Zaḥfur	Zaḥfur	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	•	•	•	Ṭa'fur	Ṭa'fur	•
Nawasir (3) (+).....	•	•	•	•	•	•
Keth (3) (+).....	Uru	•	Rikkbe	Za'fur	Za'fur	•
Ramadi South (1) (+). ..	Hura	•	•	—		•
Rerhan (3) (+).	•	•	•	-		•
Bahgrif (3) (+)	•	•	Mumrage	—	—	•
Palestine :						
Southern area (o) (-)(+).	Selab	Nier	Shoḥa	Shoḥa	Mummar	Habbl
Libya :						
Tripoli (o) ( ) (+)	Habbl	—	—		—	Habbl

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭîf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭîf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 762 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

F 782 716 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F M1 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts.

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver.

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [191] strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [191]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [584]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [191]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Feilahin MR13
Silwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (always an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invertives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

83.

The Language of the Wise.

Aššaret bi-'ēnēha, fihimt suallhe; 539*
we-kull el-labibin bil-ašāre yifhamu. 832 [201]

She made signs with her eyes and I understood
her question;
All wise people understand by signs.

84.

Rose, Look Out!

A young peasant is at work in his field, near a house, in which lives a girl, to whom he would make advances.

Ya warde ṭilli
min rēṭ el-fellāḥ!
Ṭallet-li min fō'
bil-ḥala' weṭ-ṭō',
5 *lamma ṛamāni eš-šō'.*
Fi-'arḍik ṭilli.

O Rose look out
Upon the peasant's field!
Then she looked down from above,
With earrings and neck-ring (adorned), [301]
Till longing seized me.
"Have pity, look out!"

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[2] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [858]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant [568]
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *bozo*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[2] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analyst]

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being less embarrassed, less inquisitive, [312] and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

[868] On the whole for him this is a stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion of Ramadàn is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the province are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206] moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785
has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796
proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [202] the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[302] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[859] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
864 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[208] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals, who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
285 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[209] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[2] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [299]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [569]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema; thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is /183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- /185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe /183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, /185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (").
As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the /166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside /162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary /166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other /184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

212 This improvement is also obvious in Silwa itself: ten years ago there were two public scribes in the village to whom people would resort for letter-writing or making formal complaints, but they have had to close their establishment on not finding enough customers. The spread of literacy in Egypt has generally been made more difficult because of the difference between the colloquial and the classical Arabic, which is taught in schools. The relation of the former to the latter is almost like that of [197] Swiss German to High German. Moreover, some reformers maintain that it takes too long with the present script for the child to become sufficiently literate, and this difficulty has prompted some Egyptian scholars to advocate a Latin script instead of the present Arab script.[1] The numerous rules of inflection, changing vowels and consonants, and the diacritical marks attached to the words according to meaning, make correct reading a tiresome task. It has often been said, and not without some measure of justification, that in European languages, one has to read in order to understand, while in Arabic, one has to understand in order to read.

In Silwa, however, though people are increasingly attaching more 212 importance to the ability to read and write, this instrument cannot be 871 considered as a vital motivating force in their lives. The villagers' traditions can be mainly communicated orally, with a few literate persons on whom would devolve the responsibility of communicating the cultural and religious aspects requiring literacy. It is not surprising, then, that some of the villagers, especially most women, who had learnt reading and writing at a compulsory school, have almost relapsed into illiteracy. The remoteness and relative isolation of the village, along with the poverty in cultural influences such as newspapers, books, and other suitable reading material, explain to a great extent this phenomenon. The degree of [004] literacy could be better assessed, however, from the kind of literature that is read in the village, and from the extent to which the reading ability is utilized. There are hardly any books in the village, except those few related to religious matters in one way or another. The following is a list of all the books which are acquired and read by the villagers:

Books on Jurisprudence (fikh): *Matn Asafti, al-Ishmawi, Sharh abu-al Hasan, matn Addardiri, Risalat Ibn abi-Zaid al-Kairuwani, Azzurkani.*

Burdat-al-Busiri (The Mantle Ode), a hymn in praise of the Prophet.

Dalail al-Khairat. A book read usually for propitiation, and in petitions to God.

Matn al-Jawhara in Divinity (Tawheed—Unity of God).

Manakib Assalihen (The Virtue of Pious Men).

Mankib al-Hassan wal-Hussain (The Virtues of the Prophet's Cousins).

Manakib Assayid al-Badawi.

Kasaid ahl Attarik (Poems of the Mystics).

Certain books from which texts of charms are copied.

Mawlid al-Manawi (Prophet's Life-story).

[1] A. F. Fahmy, *Latin Script for the Writing of Arabic* (Arabic), Cairo, 1944.

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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [574] [461] [204] 484 [988] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

512 562

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

tion of Ramadan is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the province are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206] moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785
has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796
proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [202]
the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, and through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).
One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).
Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.
Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.
One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

×539
77
796
[769]

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 3—5 describe [211] the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bāb in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ʿatabe ḥaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bāb mezauwaʾ, ya Seiyid!*
Win ʿišt ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
waʾid ʾanadîlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

1. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter Ten

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

121 It has been pointed out by some anthropologists that in homogeneous primitive societies, the attention is focused more on the desirability of learning over against the desirability of teaching.[1] As the cultural alternatives are so limited in such communities, the individual finds himself learning the accepted skills, habits and attitudes which everyone else agrees that he would wish to learn. The desirability of learning the socially acceptable modes of living is contrasted, on the whole, with modern societies where individuals are taught various things on which there is no consensus of agreement that everyone has a desire to know. This distinction between folk and modern societies reflected in the different methods of learning and teaching is, of course, not an absolute distinction. For instance, in folk communities teaching does take place, e.g. in certain ceremonies, in the constant corrections and admonitions to children, and so on; and learning does take place in modern societies in the family and group situations.

816 In folk communities in general, the educative process, whether through learning or teaching, is coterminous with life, and none of its situations is deliberately singled out or isolated for drill or special training.[2] In Silwa the popular saying tends to confirm that the desire to learn is preferable to the need of being taught: 'If the boy does not learn, time will teach him the hard way.' This is also in line with the traditions of Moslem society, where people have been expected to seek knowledge as 'knowledge does not seek people'. Whether in search of special skills or religious enlightenment, the master did not go seeking pupils, but rather the converse. In the Arabic language the word for pupil or student (talib) literally means 'the searcher', he who requests and requires knowledge.

It should also be pointed out here that folk life in Silwa has been relatively independent of the influence of the written word, and it has been affected by it only through a small number of people who were considered

[1] Margaret Mead, 'Our Educational Emphases in Primitive Perspective', in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 634.
[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 27.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64-8.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

872 794 [562] learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

[998] After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing 217 [386] fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually use d.

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Aysha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·6	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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is estimated that the total percentage of literacy for this year is about 25 per cent.[1]

It is worth noting here that there is no definite standard or critique for determining literacy in the official census in Egypt. Officials who conduct the census may consider a person literate if he or she can read a sentence in print. They might decide to include a person as literate on hearsay. Even if they take writing as one of the requirements for literacy, it is difficult to know exactly what criterion they adopt, and what type of writing or speed they require. A person is sometimes considered literate if he can sign his name.[2]

There is certainly a great improvement in the whole country since 1907 with regard to the percentage of literacy, especially in the age group between ten and nineteen. The following percentages show the state of literacy in different age ranges.

TABLE VIII

Literacy in different age ranges

Age	*1907* %	*Age*	*1917* %
0–9	1·2	0–9	3·2
10–14	7·7	10–19	10·2
15–19	8·4	20–29	9·6
20 and over	7·0	30–39	8·5
		40–49	8·7
		50–59	8·1
		60 and over	4·6

Age	*1927* %	*1937* %
5–9	11·8	38·6
10–14	18·2	21·8
15–19	14·9	16·7
20–29	14·8	14·7
30–39	13·7	13·4
40–49	13·2	13·0
50–59	8·3	7·6
60 and over not stated	10·0	18·9[3]

[1] Ministry of Social Affairs, *In the Service of the Egyptian Village*, pamphlet 2 (Arabic), Government Press, Cairo, 1951.

[2] It is considered that literacy requirement must include the ability to translate the signs not only into sounds, but also into meanings. It is suggested that a good test for writing ability is to dictate one hundred words from a basic word list asking the person to write them down. Unesco, *Fundamental Education*, Paris, 1947, p. 24.

[3] Worked out according to the 1907 Census, p. 142; 1917 Census, p. 563; 1927 Census, p. 565; 1937 Census, pp. 210–12.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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●212 This improvement is also obvious in Silwa itself: ten years ago there were two public scribes in the village to whom people would resort for letter-writing or making formal complaints, but they have had to close their establishment on not finding enough customers. The spread of literacy in Egypt has generally been made more difficult because of the difference between the colloquial and the classical Arabic, which is taught [197] in schools. The relation of the former to the latter is almost like that of Swiss German to High German. Moreover, some reformers maintain that it takes too long with the present script for the child to become sufficiently literate, and this difficulty has prompted some Egyptian scholars to advocate a Latin script instead of the present Arab script.[1] The numerous rules of inflection, changing vowels and consonants, and the diacritical marks attached to the words according to meaning, make correct reading a tiresome task. It has often been said, and not without some measure of justification, that in European languages, one has to read in order to understand, while in Arabic, one has to understand in order to read.

212 In Silwa, however, though people are increasingly attaching more 871 importance to the ability to read and write, this instrument cannot be considered as a vital motivating force in their lives. The villagers' traditions can be mainly communicated orally, with a few literate persons on whom would devolve the responsibility of communicating the cultural and religious aspects requiring literacy. It is not surprising, then, that some of the villagers, especially most women, who had learnt reading and writing at a compulsory school, have almost relapsed into illiteracy. The remoteness and relative isolation of the village, along with the poverty in cultural influences such as newspapers, books, and other suitable reading [004] material, explain to a great extent this phenomenon. The degree of literacy could be better assessed, however, from the kind of literature that is read in the village, and from the extent to which the reading ability is utilized. There are hardly any books in the village, except those few related to religious matters in one way or another. The following is a list of all the books which are acquired and read by the villagers:

Books on Jurisprudence (fikh): *Matn Assafti, al-Ishmawi, Sharh abu-al Hasan, matn Addardiri, Risalat Ibn abi-Zaid al-Kairuwani, Azzurkani.*

Burdat-al-Busiri (The Mantle Ode), a hymn in praise of the Prophet.

Dalail al-Khairat. A book read usually for propitiation, and in petitions to God.

Matn al-Jawhara in Divinity (Tawheed—Unity of God).

Manakib Assaliheen (The Virtue of Pious Men).

Mankib al-Hassan wal-Hussain (The Virtues of the Prophet's Cousins).

Manakib Assayid al-Badawi.

Kasaid ahl Attarik (Poems of the Mystics).

Certain books from which texts of charms are copied.

Mawlid al-Manawi (Prophet's Life-story).

[1] A. F. Fahmy, *Latin Script for the Writing of Arabic* (Arabic), Cairo, 1944.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
● [212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the
[782] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few of the older people can read or write they have largely to [217] depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole village belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at *sîga*, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The 1923 Constitution decreed that education should be compulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun to take effect. Schools are being established all over the countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages, schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places that within living memory had never seen a teacher are provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child population will be receiving instruction ([1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers and wounded them. The peasants care little for education. They only want their children to help them to increase their earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him and teaches them the Koran.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. E 873
In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria.
The Government's primary and secondary schools count E
their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed [872]
with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, E [204
reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the 214]
best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not E
more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-* [658]
Fellah, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to E 814
Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo 815
or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national E 812
language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, 814
something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not 641
just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this 178
development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal ? E F
Are they following the élite of the cities ? The answer is : 369
either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is 178
discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelm- 212
ing majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise E
it. ("[illegible]) It may be that the fault lies with the English, who F 636
developed everything in Egypt except education ; with the 181
fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no 871
eagerness to learn ; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of F
the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know 212
how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (74).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (75). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and [651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah [681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows [731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has [661 suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to [453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

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735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not
656 scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.

746 The greater number of official measures, for example, are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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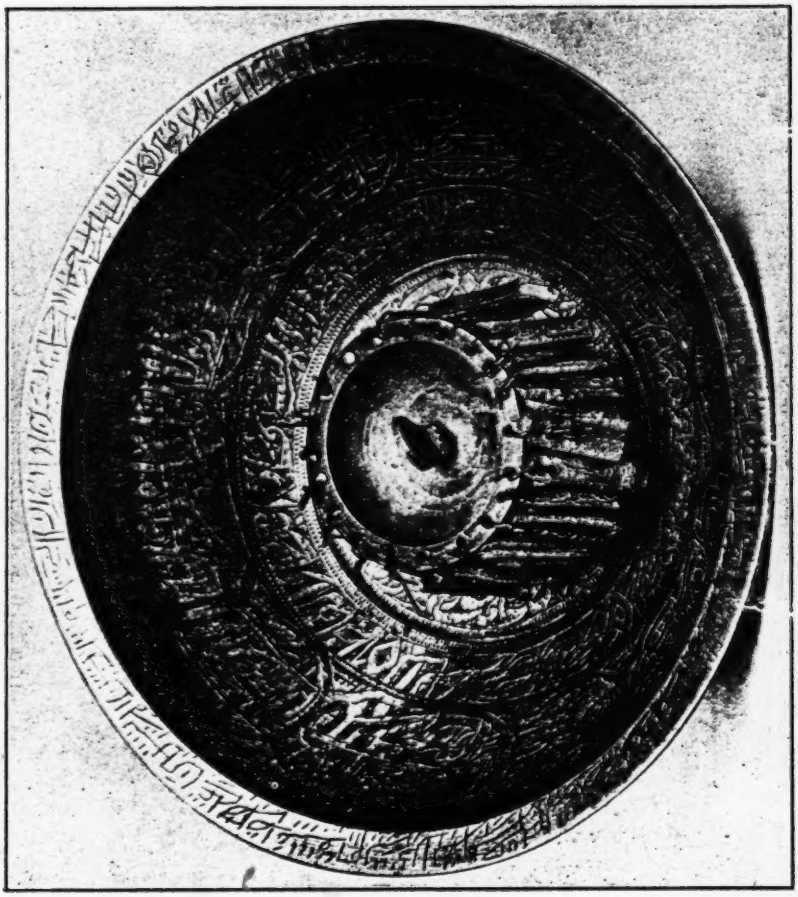

THE "FEAR" CUP (*Tāsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 69

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [741] [314]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa
Copts MR10

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few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:

He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:

If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:

Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:

Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:

In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:

The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:

One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:

The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:

The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:

Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:

One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:

Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.

[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa
Copts MR10

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when the land used to be flooded with the water of the Nile during this period.[1]

Thus these phrases connected with the Coptic months contain some of the community's wisdom related to its technical activities, food consumption and indications of weather changes. It is worth noting that while there are no fixed dates in the Coptic Calendar for any specific agricultural activities, the latter are carried out within a certain time-limit, such as the beginning of a month or second week in a month or towards the end or before beginning of such and such a month, and so forth.

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The following is a seasonal calendar for the various types of farm work as regulated by the Coptic Calendar.

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Toot	*The Winter Crop (Shitwi)* Either fallow land or early harvested millet: during the first ten days of the month land is sown with clover (berseem).
Babah	Sowing of wheat and barley (during the first ten days). First irrigation of beans and clover.
Hatoor	First irrigation of wheat and barley called 'cleaning irrigation'. Cutting clover before irrigation. Irrigation of beans.
Kiyah	Second irrigation of wheat and barley after distributing fertilizer. Cutting of clover for the second time.[1] Irrigation of beans and clover.
Toobah	Third irrigation of wheat, with fertilizer only for the weak section. Third irrigation of barley. Third cutting of clover. Irrigation of clover and beans.

[1] Clover is cut four times, at intervals of thirty days.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

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Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. First cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Misri	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.
241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer*, *febrayer*, *mâris*, *abrîl*, *myo*, *yûnyo*, *yûlyo*, *oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs".

Ma 'ultē-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until later. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Coots MR10

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!" C 776

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F 776 F 784 F [823] F [226] [227] F

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared. C [464] E [241] C [188]

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly. E 776 E C [304] C F [194]

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (46).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Coots MR10

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!" C 776

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F 776 F 784 F [823] F [226] [227] F

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared. C [464] E [241] C [788]

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly. E 776 E C [304] C F [994]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes certain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX II

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. Last cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Misri	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product		*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs	..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

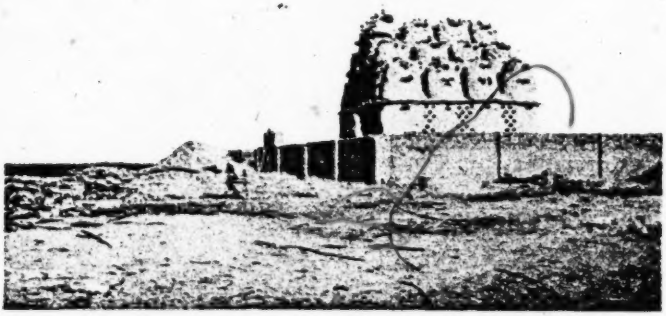

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii, 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

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Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla duḳḳ!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

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I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

[231]
[172]
[133]

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[961] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] [152] [283] [415]

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the 243 789 978

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[492]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[407]
[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

789
782
796

[892]
[231]
[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *ʿafārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *ʿafārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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796
174

[912]
[291]
[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

M

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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505
133
137
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FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

[page 179]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

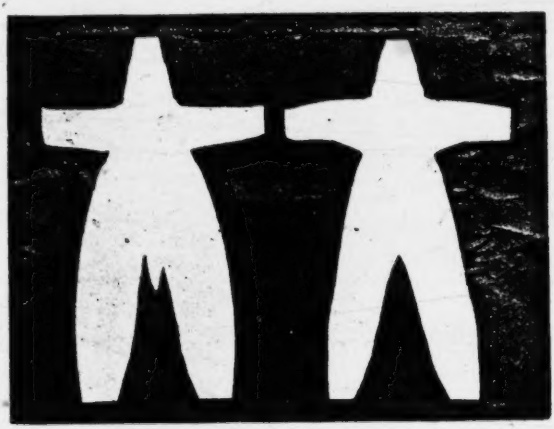

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 782 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, [776] and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḫarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*. 796 769

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before 796 789

[29] [231] [782]

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, [illegible] share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

and allow it to germinate before the top layer dries. This 407
plough is also appropriate when as a result of a limited water 241
supply the task is to prevent a premature drying-out of the soil. None of the imported ploughs tested hitherto has proved genuinely superior to the local plough, when mechanical, agricultural and economic factors are taken into account.'

The Egyptian plough is the resultant of two interacting factors, the nature of the soil and the means of the fellah (it costs no more than P.T. 100). Its mechanism is so simple that it does not have the effect of dispensing with the ploughman's effort or of putting a distance between him and his furrow; so contact between man and soil remains close.

To level down the tops of the furrows and break up the clods of earth the fellah uses a *zahhâfa*. This is nothing but a rough beam of wood, or the trunk of a palm tree, about twelve feet long, on which the fellah stands while it is pulled by a pair of draught-animals. This very primitive instrument thus acts both as roller and harrow, and is sometimes used also to cover in the seed sown by hand. The *zahhâfa* is used after ploughing, and about four feddans can be treated in a day.

To level the land, which since it is artificially irrigated must be as even as possible, the fellah uses his *kassâbia*, a sort of coffer weighing about 120 lbs and costing about [435]
75 piastres. It has two sides, is open along the front, and is held by two handles, which the fellah raises in order to scrape off the mounds and fill up the hollows with the earth thus picked up.

The *gamoossa* and the donkey have often been mentioned, 231
and will continue to be, for they are the two chief aids of the fellah, and are well adapted both to his needs and to Egyptian conditions.

The *gamoossa*, the poor man's cow, is a mud-coloured buffalo, stronger than the ox, and extremely resistant to disease. It must have more fodder than any other draught animal. On account of its great usefulness the fellah takes more care of it than he does of himself, which is not saying much.

If properly fed, the *gamoossa* gives more milk than any cow in Egypt. In winter and spring it needs to graze

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rotls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [262] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *bàladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley ; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594 His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231 at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241 look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461 gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511 strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434 most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given):

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (").

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (").

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) ("), both of

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312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.
647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (**) Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zariba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [378 354 415] [296 515]

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

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133
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Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

Page 160 (B)

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

789 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

755 231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

755 164 292 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. [114] d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communi- [171] cation of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq (Za'āzi').

Daḫaltē bēt Alla,
la'it ḥamām aḫḍar;
bila"amū sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi surto!*

●[231] I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, [788] in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. [770] "It", that is, the house of Allah.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs".

Ma 'ultē-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until later. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

97.

Good Friends.

539x 406 [231] [312]

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers.

883 539x [312] [462]

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether the girls of the village have already been there to get water, as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song.

Ya sā'ye, yammû ṭāra,
waradet 'alēki-l-'adāra?
Waradet 'alēye ummû mandīl
wil-ka'b sēi el-ḥiyāre.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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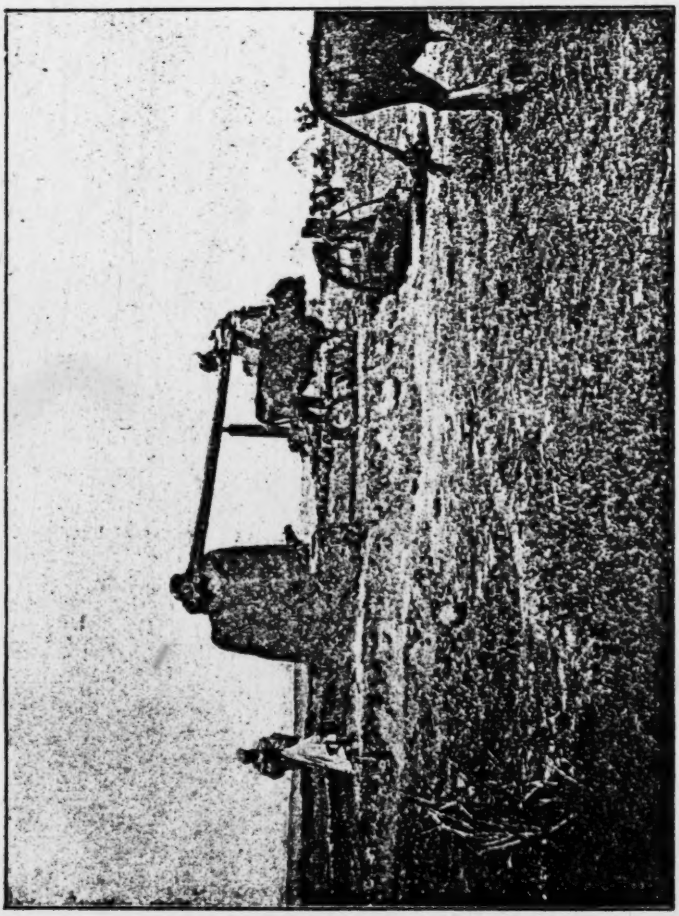

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Sāqye Near the Great Pyramids.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 And pile up the dove-jars and boards,
832 And pack the peaches and the apples!
Come, my beloved and caress me,
Else thou wilt stay out and leave me alone."

231 1. The bull which turns the sâqye. (Compare No. 97.)

343 6. The walls of the dove-houses are built of Nile mud
415 and earthen jars, so ranged on each other, that the openings are toward the inside and the bottoms toward the outside. These jars furnish the holes for the nests. The bottoms of some of the jars are knocked out, in order to make entrance-holes. Boards and the ribs of palm-branches, form perches on the inside, while for the outside, branches of trees are usually stuck into the wall.

The illustration shows a half-demolished dove-house, the construction of which is thus made very clear.

These fortress-like dove-houses are to be found especially in Middle Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

123.

Unfaithfulness.

×539 622 661 Šēḫ el-balad is the mayor or head of the village. This office still exists, although much of its power has been transferred to the ʿomde, another of the magistrates of the village.

Minni lē, minni lē,
ya-bnaiye? u-rdēti lē?
Šēḫ baladi wanaʾul-lo ē?
iddāni iš-šabbē, ṭaḥant ʿalē!

"Why dost thou shun me, why dost thou shun me,
My little maid? And why hast thou dealt so ill?"
"He is the shēkh of my village, and what can I say to him?
[731] He loaned me the buffalo-calf and I have ground with it!"

3. How could I, a poor girl, refuse the great man?
4. "Moreover, I was under obligations to him." The mills are often turned by buffaloes.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his
[536] gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

F 232 759

The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

F [157] [291]

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

F 119 123

When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

F [054]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

757 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of
114 boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no
123 exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232]
[241]

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate
743 medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

×539 One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimāl,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fidha-š-šimāl.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[233] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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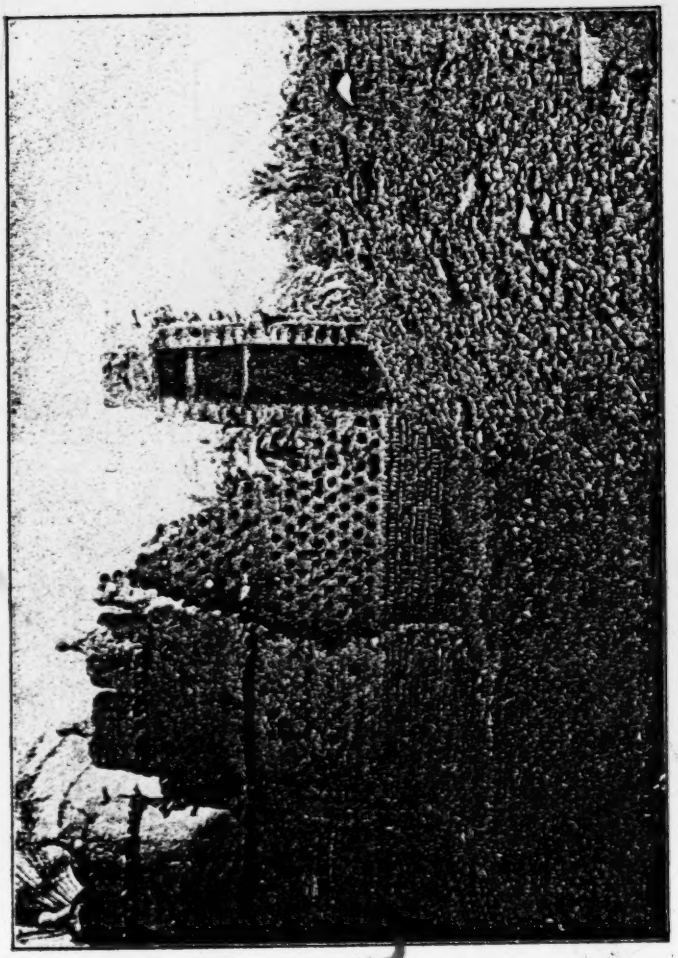

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Ruined Dove-House.
Ehnasye in Middle Egypt.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

A Contrast.

102. (The Beloved.) 539x

Fayit ʿala darbina
kumm el-yalak wardi,
ʾalu: ḥabîbak ḍaʿîf!
ʾultê: inʾilû ʿandi!
5 *muḫaddito rîš naʿāme*
u-masnado ʾalbi.
we-limmu ḥamām el-balad
wes-samnê min ʿandi!

As I was walking in our street,
The jacket-sleeve rose-colored,
They said; "Thy beloved is ill."
I said: "Carry him to me!
5 His pillow shall be of ostrich feathers, [237]
His support, my heart!
Gather the doves of the village, —
I will give the fat (for the roasting)."

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
[536] coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

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THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

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Chapter One

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

THE natural resources, methods of production, means of livelihood and property system of any community provide a tangible mechanism which regulates and gives stability to the relations between its members in accordance with the value system governing that culture.[1] In Silwa, the village community under study, agriculture is the basic activity of the great majority of the population.

According to the 1947 Census the distribution of occupations in Silwa is as follows:[2]

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*
Farmers	1288	1451
Industrial workers	47	84
Masons	47	0
Transport	36	0
Trade	60	1
Personal servants	10	387
Servants in Govt. offices and other social services	78	[illegible]
Unproductive and undefined jobs	272	86
Unemployed	292	317
TOTAL: 4457	2130	2327

Taking this table as a criterion for village occupations, it is clear that more than 60 per cent of the total population are engaged in agriculture. Yet the official census does not define its categories of occupation, and is

[1] Ernest Beaglehole, *Property, A Study in Social Psychology*, London, 1931.
[2] *Population Census, 1947* (Book I, Province of Aswan), Government Press, Cairo, 1951, p. 25.

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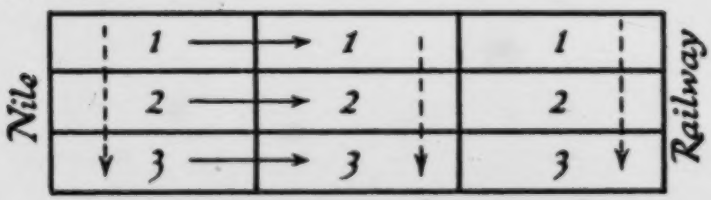
428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are [651] fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than [578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway [311] station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging [425] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellaheen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

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the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

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On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

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It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

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883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

Boys	*Girls*
FROM THREE TO SEVEN	
No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. Children (between five and seven) [202] are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being less embarrassed, less inquisitive, [312] and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.	Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.
In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.	Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.
Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.	Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.
Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.	Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.
On the whole for him this is a [868] stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.	Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

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[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [312]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . . [241]

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [269] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" - the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [292] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [269] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

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It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

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is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living. [841] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

[524] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent [369] the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous' [525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.

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APPENDIX II

when the land used to be flooded with the water of the Nile during this period.[1]

Thus these phrases connected with the Coptic months contain some of the community's wisdom related to its technical activities, food consumption and indications of weather changes. It is worth noting that while there are no fixed dates in the Coptic Calendar for any specific agricultural activities, the latter are carried out within a certain time-limit, such as the beginning of a month or second week in a month or towards the end or before beginning of such and such a month, and so forth.

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The following is a seasonal calendar for the various types of farm work as regulated by the Coptic Calendar.

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Toot	*The Winter Crop (Shitwi)* Either fallow land or early harvested millet: during the first ten days of the month land is sown with clover (berseem).
Babah	Sowing of wheat and barley (during the first ten days). First irrigation of beans and clover.
Hatoor	First irrigation of wheat and barley called 'cleaning irrigation'. Cutting clover before irrigation. Irrigation of beans.
Kiyah	Second irrigation of wheat and barley after distributing fertilizer. Cutting of clover for the second time.[1] Irrigation of beans and clover.
Toobah	Third irrigation of wheat, with fertilizer only for the weak section. Third irrigation of barley. Third cutting of clover. Irrigation of clover and beans.

[1] Clover is cut four times, at intervals of thirty days.

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Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. Last cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Misri	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

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Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product	*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat ..	6	24
1 ardab of barley ..	3	3
1 ardab of beans ..	6	6
		£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

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The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product	*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs ..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

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[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

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Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar	.	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

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times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

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sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

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FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHADŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

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152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, [179] however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the [834] women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[865] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
291 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

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FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

[463] In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

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789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put
852 into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *kohl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the [856] child wide open and beautiful eyes.

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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THE LAW OF REVENGE

and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. 312 685 241

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern developments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for

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423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[961] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] 152 283 415

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. 243 789 978 These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

243
789
798

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

[94]
[312]

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

243
431

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

243
793
794

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[241]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-
256 mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at 256

[462] [291] [241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Coots MR10

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *karīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 342 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 627 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Ḥasan and elsewhere[1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

FA 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [172]

FIG. 175. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt.[3]

FA 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

FA 241 423

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings.[6]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

A [113]

[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bershah*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

FA 241 423

and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-'Amarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht.*[2]

FA 285 [172]
FA 407

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *fūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A 286 [532]
G [407]

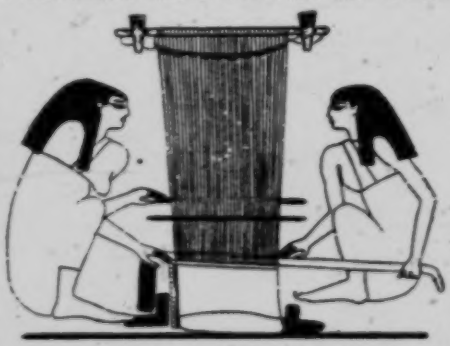

FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Caillaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 17A.

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

The modern shādūf (pp. 110 f.) finds its exact counterpart in paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 789 718 241
A [312] [532]

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 33, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

A [532]

FA 431 465 241

FIG. 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *summāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 431 465 241

second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]

A [789] [718] [532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thèbes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥekai* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏt*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḥry-ḥb*).

A [789] [718] [532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

A F

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

789 782

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

A [113]

2: Black[illegible]n E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 464 465

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

FA 241 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wresiński, *op. cit.*, Pl. 134.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

FA 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

A [113]

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes these classes less stable, but more progressive.
121

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

since the last phase of the quaternary period, over the flat edges of its bed, and spread out in ever widening layers across its mouth, encroaching on the sea (*). E F 133 134

These deposits have created on top of the granite, limestone or sand a layer of black earth, varying in depth between 10 to 30 metres in different regions.

The Nile soil which thus covers the valley consists of both coarse and colloidal clay, with an admixture of various salts. It is an amalgam of finely ground particles carried down by the Blue and White Niles. The composition of this arable soil, unlike that of most agricultural countries, is substantially the same everywhere. It has a high mineral content, which, as we shall see later, has an important influence on the food of the fellah.

This soil, once deposited, is continually irrigated and enriched by the Nile, by means of either flooding or canalisation, but always under the control of man. The time-honoured system of basin irrigation, still in use over a million feddans, consists in discharging the water at flood-time through small channels on to *hôds* — vast areas of land surrounded by dykes. The land absorbs water until it is saturated; then the remainder slowly drains away, after depositing a layer of the fine silt with which the water was laden before flowing into the basins. Each feddan thus receives about 7,000 cubic metres of water, which leave 8 or 9 tons of silt. Immediately after the water is drained off (about November) the crops are sown. They are then left to ripen until harvest-time without needing any further irrigation. The land then lies fallow till the next flood. However, many of those who farm basin land, in order to produce a summer as well as a winter crop, make use of the underground water by means of pumps, which are now so common that they have modified the system of cultivation in these districts. F 134 312 241

The perennial system of irrigation, introduced in 1840, and made possible through engineering works, of which the most notable is the Aswan Dam, now covers all the Delta and the greater part of Upper Egypt (4,300,000 feddans). The Nile no longer completely floods the land. Its water is stored in reservoirs, then distributed through barrages into a network of canals which water the land throughout the year. F 312

241 132 Thus at High Nile (August to October) the fields are no longer flooded, but only irrigated, and bear the crops called *nili*. When the flood is over, and the level of the flood is falling (November to April), the land, being still moist, receives sufficient water for the winter crop (*shetwi*). At Low Nile (April to July) the reservoirs are gradually emptied to provide water for ripening a third crop, called the summer crop (*sêfi*).

132 134 To be fruitful, the land needs not only water, but also air. The sun, by the vertical cracks its summer heat makes in the level soil, plays its part in reviving the fallow land. It removes excess salt and mellows the soil by letting the air penetrate deeply into the earth, so that the land is dehydrated and renewed (¹).

We thus see the Nile, helped by the sun, already at work preparing and cultivating the land, and so determining the fellah's physical environment, the living Egypt.

133 In fact, wherever the Nile does not penetrate, either from above or below, the desert begins abruptly, without any intermediate zone. The conventional colourings of maps, which show Egypt as a thin green strip across a great dun-coloured space, correspond exactly with reality. From the top of the Great Pyramid near Cairo, or from the hills of the Sa'îd (²), one is struck, whichever way one looks, by the clear line of demarcation where human labour and habitation stop short. Between the cliffs of the Libyan and Arabian deserts lies a level valley, 650 miles in length. Its width is less than a mile at Wadi-Halfa (³), 3 miles at Edfu, about 8 between Luxor and Assiut, where it narrows again, and 15 at Beni-Suef, whence a branch goes off westward to the Fayûm. From Cairo it spreads out fanwise to form a coast-line of 160 miles at the north of the Delta. In all there are some 12,000 square miles of good land, lying in the midst of about 400,000 square miles of barren sand. This 3 % of the whole area represents the living and productive Egypt.

Its shape is given to it by the Nile. It looks like a giant lotus, whose roots, the White and the Blue Nile, are planted in the heart of Africa, in the high mountains of Abyssinia and the great lakes of the Congo. From Khartoum the sap rises along a single stem, which pushes into Egypt at Wadi-Halfa, shows signs of green at Aswan, bears a single leaf

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'id, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166
families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464]
there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

F 162 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between 241 human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 175 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus(10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

E F 161 511 In point of fact, once order and public security were re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E F 161 162 The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000 inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (*). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (*). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 135] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (*). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

and allow it to germinate before the top layer dries. This 407
plough is also appropriate when as a result of a limited water 241
supply the task is to prevent a premature drying-out of the soil. None of the imported ploughs tested hitherto has proved genuinely superior to the local plough, when mechanical, agricultural and economic factors are taken into account.'

The Egyptian plough is the resultant of two interacting factors, the nature of the soil and the means of the fellah (it costs no more than P.T. 100). Its mechanism is so simple that it does not have the effect of dispensing with the ploughman's effort or of putting a distance between him and his furrow; so contact between man and soil remains close.

To level down the tops of the furrows and break up the clods of earth the fellah uses a *zahhâfa*. This is nothing but a rough beam of wood, or the trunk of a palm tree, about twelve feet long, on which the fellah stands while it is pulled by a pair of draught-animals. This very primitive instrument thus acts both as roller and harrow, and is sometimes used also to cover in the seed sown by hand. The *zahhâfa* is used after ploughing, and about four feddans can be treated in a day.

To level the land, which since it is artificially irrigated must be as even as possible, the fellah uses his *kassâbia*, a sort of coffer weighing about 120 lbs and costing about [435]
75 piastres. It has two sides, is open along the front, and is held by two handles, which the fellah raises in order to scrape off the mounds and fill up the hollows with the earth thus picked up.

The *gamoossa* and the donkey have often been mentioned, 231
and will continue to be, for they are the two chief aids of the fellah, and are well adapted both to his needs and to Egyptian conditions.

The *gamoossa*, the poor man's cow, is a mud-coloured buffalo, stronger than the ox, and extremely resistant to disease. It must have more fodder than any other draught animal. On account of its great usefulness the fellah takes more care of it than he does of himself, which is not saying much.

If properly fed, the *gamoossa* gives more milk than any cow in Egypt. In winter and spring it needs to graze

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rotls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [26a] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *baladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double 312
angs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the [805]
ank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull
p the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those
n the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further
side.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the 312
ater reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of 461
nnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is cease- 241
ssly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller
annels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—
ve days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen
low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order
lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through
e channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles.
ut the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, accord-
g to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by
nd. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the
mplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his
ld, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The
st way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank 241
water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they 312
pport a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and
ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and
ore or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning
wards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a
cond movement they straighten themselves, turn to the
ld, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of
eir forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation
annel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity,
ings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the
ms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot
ar it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly [461]
o pairs work turn and turn about.

241 312 It has been calculated that by this method little more than 200 cubic feet of water, or enough for about one acre, can be raised in a day of twelve hours. Such a yield bears no reasonable proportion to the effort exerted, but the instrument is extremely cheap. As long as poverty remains, such methods will continue in use.

This method is called *nattâla*. It was already known to the fellaheen of Ancient Egypt [22] and is used by Japanese peasants, for example on Shikoku.

Second Method

One or two men crouch at the water's edge, turning and turning the crank handle of a wooden cylinder, which reaches from water level to the mouth of the runnel. The water rises spirally inside this cylinder, which is about 18 ins. across. This is the *tambour* or Archimedean screw, a wooden cylinder hooped with iron and about six or nine feet in length, according as it is turned by one or two men. The spiral is fixed between the inside wall and an iron axis, one end of which is bent into a crank, while the other turns on a stake fixed under water.

The *tambour* can irrigate two or three times as much as a *nattâla*, but it costs more and is heavier to work. Moreover, since it requires the continual use of the forearm, it is very much more tiring. Nevertheless it is still much in use, and may frequently be seen.

These two kinds of water-lifting machinery are practicable when the water level is not very low, but sometimes water has to be sought three, six or even thirty feet below the level of the field to be irrigated.

The easiest thing would be to instal a pumping engine. There are many of these on the large estates, but none on small properties; for as the fellaheen are numerous and 181 conservative, poor in money and rich in time, this "con- 183 venience" does not commend itself to them. They solved the watering problem ages ago in a way which matches their means, and they feel no need to desert their present system for one which may possibly be better, but which is as yet new and untried.

To raise water from a depth of more than three feet the fellah uses a method as primitive as it is simple. He plants

in the earth, at the water's edge, two stakes about five feet 241
high and a yard apart. When wood is scarce, these two 312
pillars are made of cane or maize stalks daubed over with mud. They are joined at the top by a horizontal bar, like the crossbar of a goalpost. At the middle of this crossbar is balanced a lever more or less straight and about ten feet long. Its shorter arm bears a heavy rock or a great lump of dried mud, and at the end of the longer arm hang two or three yards of rope carrying a bucket, leather basket or old petrol can. This apparatus is placed in the same axis as the channel to be filled.

The fellah stands on a platform made halfway up the bank and pulls down the balanced pole until the bucket dips into the water and fills itself. A slight upward push, helped by the counterweight, brings it just above the runnel, into which it is emptied. All these movements are slow and rhythmic, sometimes accompanied by a droning chant. [533] Their variety might seem to lessen the effort, and yet the fellah finds this task more gruelling than any other. This is the impression one would gather from the melancholy tone of his chant, and it is confirmed by those who have had the patience to collect the words of such songs ([23]).

By the end of a twelve-hour day two fellaheen working alternately in two- or three-hour shifts may succeed in watering about 1/8 acre of cultivated land. One apparatus of this kind suffices for the cultivation of a feddan. The water may be taken from a well or a pool.

This method is widespread amongst the poor peasantry of the East and Far East, especially the Arabs. But the system originated in Egypt. It may be seen depicted on the oldest bas-reliefs, and nowhere else is it so much in use.

The *shadûf*, as it is called, may be used in combination. In the region of Qena and Dendera, in Upper Egypt, you may still see sets of two, three or four of these apparatus used together or in series, to raise the water from a depth. But when the level is very low the *saqia* is more often used.

The *saqia* is really a machine, though clumsy and primitive. It is made from acacia or sycamore wood and driven not by manpower but by beasts.

The great horizontal wheel, turned anti-clockwise by a harnessed ox or donkey, engages with its rough cogs a vertical

241 312 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth downward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 476] A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20, according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is [887 857] left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious watering raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bâladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semâd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semâd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
321 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer, febrayer, mâris, abrîl, myo, yûnyo, yûlyo, oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594 His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231 at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241 look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461 gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help' to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511 strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434 most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given):

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

up and is transmitted in water and sodden ground, in the /164
stagnant village ponds, and, since the development of perennial irrigation, in the standing water of runnels and badly levelled canals.

Bilharzia is not in itself a serious disease. But, beginning with the passing of blood in the urine, it often develops, through lack of attention, into complications such as the stone, fistula, and ulceration of the penis. The infection may reach the kidneys, the liver and even the eyes. Above all, it lasts for 18 or 20 years. 90% of the male fellaheen are affected by it and become accustomed to passing blood and feeling continually below par.

Bilharzia is transmitted through urine and water; hookworm through earth and excrement. Like bilharzia, hookworm is a collective disease, a permanent epidemic, and is introduced into the system by a parasite which passes through the skin. Ankylostomiasis is less widespread than bilharzia, but more dangerous, since it consumes the red corpuscles of the blood ([43]).

As the fellaheen never make use of human dung, and /514
have never learnt the use of latrines, they relieve themselves /164
no matter where. If they are already infected with the worm, [24] ●
every such place is a new source of danger to their fellows, who walk barefoot or lie down heedlessly on the ground. The worm can move several feet in the darkness; it settles in damp soil, whence it passes through the skin to the intestines.

You may see countless men and women in the prime of /164
life who are stricken with this disease, their faces puffy and lifeless with its ravages. Neither their vigorous constitution, their youth, nor the treatment they receive has been able to save them.

Malaria, spread by the ricefields and *birkas*, affects 65% of the fellaheen, and in some villages East of the Delta as many as 90%.

What makes these three diseases so alarming is not so much their inherent seriousness as their constantly widening extent, and the way in which the fellaheen themselves by their work and their manner of life contribute unconsciously to the perpetuation of the evil. It should also be remarked that the Government's measures to combat these diseases have not as yet had very much effect.

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkuz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require-
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a 241]
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

113

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T.*—At Akhmim and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS, Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was " envying " children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, " Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī ! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now ! " So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, " Oh, you fat camel ! " [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, "Woe to you, O Jafīla! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow "craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, "Was al-Sa'dāwī present?" Consider these two fools!

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to "Envy." To "cure" this the "old wife" betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The "old wife" says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The "old wife" once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for "envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, "May God put out her eye!"

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old "fumigating" wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

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NATIVE PLOUGH IN EGYPT

BY

MOHAMED RIAD

Since millenia the cultivable soils of Egypt is confined to the Delta and the Valley of the Nile. This soil was deposited by the Nile through immemorial times and as a result it is composed, generally speaking, of nearly homogeneous fine particles which attain a mean depth of about 10 meters. The fact that such thickness and homogeneity of the cultivated soils rendering the minimum of soil variations has contributed much to the form and technique of the prevailing plough in Egypt. In fact the Egyptian plough is a simple one which is used to break the soil and not like other contemporary ploughs in Europe and elsewhere, does not invert the soil. This may be due to the aforementioned reason, i. e., the homogeneity of the soil, as much as other physical factors foremost among them are the yearly deposition of new soils through the agency of the flood on the one hand, and the penetration of air through the soil particles during the inter-planting period on the other hand. These factors and others did not necessitate deep ploughing or soil inversion, and as long as these factors remained in control of the type of cultivation in Egypt —which it did all over the history of agriculture in Egypt, due to the system of Basin Irrigation, —the evolution of the Egyptian plough was and is very slow in what concerns the major lines of form and technique. Yet there exist in Egypt at the present time two substantially different types of ploughs which function in similar physical conditions but exist in different regions. Building a co-existence among these two plough types, mixed offshoots arose to balance the picture and to ease the sharpness of plough boundary in the relatively small cultivable area of Egypt. Now we can differentiate at least seven plough types each with a limited geographic area.

407* 241 134 241 407* [184] [184]

[p241]

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GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLOUGH TYPES.

*407 184 The seven mentioned plough types which prevail in Egypt, reproduced in plates 1 to 4, are as follows :

Type I : the split handle, straight beamed type. This type prevails in both Western and Central Delta with the exception of the south-eastern area of Central Delta.

Type II : the single handle, curved beam plough. This type, one of the two basic ploughs in Egypt, prevails in the Eastern Delta roughly south of 31 degree of North Latitudes. It also exists in the south-eastern parts of the Central Delta.

Type III : the single handle, straight beamed plough. This type, being a mixture of both previous types, prevails spatially in the same region type II occupies.

Type IV : the right-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type prevails in the northern Provinces of Upper Egypt and reaches southwards as far as the boundary of Minya and Assiut Provinces. Nearly the same type prevails in the North-eastern Delta, roughly in a pocket to the north of Latitude 31, bordered by Lake Manzala to the East and north-East, and by the Damietta branch of the Nile's Delta to the West and north-West.

Type V : the obtuse-angled double handles, straight beamed plough. This type is the second of the two basic plough forms in Egypt, and prevails in southern Upper Egypt.

Type VI : the single handle, straight and short beamed plough. This
[241] type is the usual garden type, and has many varieties, some wheeled while others are not wheeled but possess a fork-like extension of the beam, etc... This is extensively used in the Delta, and rarely found in Upper Egypt.

Type VII : the single handle, straight beamed, and wheeled plough.
[241] This type is usually used in light soils, especially nearer to the edge of the desert in Eastern Delta.

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*407 3. Handles and Grip.—The handles are all over Egypt made of wood and attain the height of between 100 and 110 cms. As already mentioned the handle or handles are fixed to the base in different methods which will be explained later. The grip is also a wooden peg either protrouding longitudinally in the case of one handle, or split handle, or a cross beam fixed to the two handles in the double handled types. The handles and the grip serve in the Egyptian ploughs to control the manouvering of the plough and the depth of the ploughing and are handled either by one hand or both hands according to the manner in which the grip is fixed.

4. The Beam.—It is either a straight or curved wooden pole which is attached to the base in different ways, and serves to connect the whole plough with the yoke by inserting a cross peg in a socket holed at the fore end of the beam. The beam attains a length which varies between 300 cms. and 350 cms. and usually has a square cross-section of 10 by 10 cms.

5. The Pin.—This is an iron bar which attains the length of about 50 cms. and a breadth of about 4 cms. This type of pin prevails all over ploughes in Egypt except in type V where we find the pin made of wood. Moreover the iron pin has a set of holes in which a peg is inserted over the beam to prevent it from springing upwards during ploughing, and at the same time controls the angle of the plough.

492 6. The Yoke. This is a wooden pole of about 270 cms. in length, which is put on necks of the animals drawing the plough. To fulfil its purpose the yoke has five pegs: one in the middle to which the rope connecting it to the beam is attached, and two pegs at each end of the yoke to which the two ends of the rope which encircles the neck of the [184] animal are tied. Such a yoke is universal all over Egypt except in type VI [241] where the plough is drawn by one animal, thus requiring a small curved yoke to which the single animal is harnessed.

*407 Such are the basic parts of the Egyptian plough and the previous description will be found useful in both understanding the structure of the plough at large, and illuminating in the following comparison.

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to types IV and V, and the longtudinal grip of both the single handled plough types II, III, VI, and VII, and of the split handled type No. I. From the point of utility a transversal grip should be handled by both hands and thus precondition that the ploughman should go behind the plough. This is indeed the case in type V, but because the handles of type IV are not retreating rearwards it became awkward for the ploughman to handle the plough from behind, and it is usual in this case that he walkes, beside the plough griping it by his right hand. This way of handling the grip is also usual in the cases of the longtudinal grip of all other types. The longtudinal grip differ in form and length in the single handle types than that of the split handle plough. In the last named the grip is a small wooden peg inserted in the upper part of the handle from behind. This peg is so small that it deserves its arabic appellation «'Asfura» which means a sparrow or a little bird. In fact the ploughman in this type does not use this small grip and instead control the plough by the upper end of the handle. The grip in the case of single handled ploughs is usually a larger wooden peg which is inserted in a socket in the handles and protrudes from both sides of the handle. Thus the grip here serves to handle the whole plough. 407* 241● 407*

4. The Share.—All the Egyptian ploughs use the varieties of shares already described above except the share of plough type No. V. Here the share has no wings or neck but take a regular form with a butt end in the rear and a sharp point on the foreward end. 407* [184]

5. The Beam.—We have already detected two kinds of beams in the Egyptian plough, namely the more commonly dispersed straight beam on the one hand and the curved beam which only appears in plough type II on the other hand.

The straight beam differ from one type plough to the other in many respects. In type VI it is to be noted that the beam is considerably short, and a cross pole is fixed to its extremity to enable either a double rope, double longtudinal wooden extension to be fixed at either ends of this cross bar, or a fork-like extension (see plate IV). This is a necessary technical adjustment for the one animal which is assigned to draw such

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point to the Italian word Bilancia[1]. In this way could we seek the origin of the term « Bazha » (the base of the plough) to such origins? In addition to these foreign terms there are arabic names, e. g., « Silah » blade or share, « Riesh » — feathers, « Romh » spear, while the words « Antot » and « Naf » may belong to the Coptic or ultimately to the Egyptian languages. In this way we may see that the Delta, though homogeneous, reveal three segmented linguistic and cultural layers: the Egyptian, the Greco-Roman, and the Arabic. This conclusion, supported by historical records, has its reasoning in the geographical situation of the Delta as the northern limits of the Egyptian Nile Valley, as the area facing the Mediterranean, and lastly as the area exposed to Arabia.

If the Delta is established as one region, we can further divide it in two sub-regions. Leaning on the arguments stated above, the Eastern Delta would stand alone as a sub-region, while the other parts of the Delta would constitute the second sub-region. There is no part of the Delta other than its East which received so many human and cultural elements from the Middle-East and Arabia and it happens that that part, in what concerns the plough, is remarkably different in terminology and technique. This area, where type II is at home, did not only account for the several offshoots of plough forms (types III, VI ,VII) but also affected the manner in which the ploughman controls his plough. All over the Delta and Middle Egypt the ploughman marches beside his plough where a split handle or a double handle is used. This, as Winkler rightly pointed out[2] is due to the influence of plough Type II, where the ploughman always walk to the left of the plough. In the same source, Winkler claims that this habit of going beside the plough in itself is an evidence of the prior spread of plough II all over the Delta and Middle Egypt[3]. But we must not build a whole theory upon one factor. It is true, as we shall see below, that a curved beamed plough was discovered in Fayum dating to the Roman Period, but this plough was not single

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(1) Winkler, H. A., 1936, p. 164.
(2) Winkler, 1936, pp. 148, 150.
(3) Winkler, 1936, pp. 150, 163.

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171 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia,
*407 and says that an Egyptian governer of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dahla and Harga use a plough which at least in Harga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts —for as such we would have found plough type V —but can only be explained by the human hazard. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis
[487] with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis.

PROSPECTS

•241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood —with its renewal of the fertility —then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil —which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in souther Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil —which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqy». This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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(1) Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough
[114] type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong to the Egyptian type I, i.e., the split handled plough.

(2) Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

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Since the application of the system of perennial irrigation 150 years ago, no actual «Sharaiy» is applied to the land, and this is one of the causes of smaller production. We do not mean to hold back the history, because perennial irrigation gives Egypt the possibility of fitting in the economic picture of the world through the cultivation of cash crops together with industrial crops (e. g., cotton and sugar-cane). Egypt cannot afford to retreat to basin irrigation, but on the contrary, all basin land will be converted in the near future to perennial irrigation, after the completion of the High Dam project. Problems of the increasing population of Egypt, added to the land hunger, needs all efforts to make the best out of the situation by increasing the crop area and its output.

Now the plough types which we have described are all of the kind which break the soil and does not invert it. This kind of ploughing only makes superficial furrows, thus does not penetrate deep. Such a method was sufficient in basin irrigation, because the soil took its due rest and airing in the Sharaiy period.

If these ploughs were substituted by a plough type which plough deeper and, which invert the soil, we may, in this way, compensate, to an extent, the lack of Sharaiy, by exposing more soil to the air, and simultaneously by letting the air penetrate in the deeper furrows which would result from such ploughing. This though may appear a bit theoritical, it deserve an experiment. So far as we know, some big land oweners use mechanical ploughs. All we need is to study the output of such ploughed lands and compare it with other land ploughed by the native wooden plough. In such a study one must take in consideration much different elements. For example one should not compare the mean output of a feddan in a big estate with that of very small holding. Small holdings though wide spread in Egypt —does not represent the usual agricultural pattern, but it is more like horticulture. In a small holding the members of the family actually work every bit of land manually. We should then compare the output of big holdings using wage labour, and using on the one hand wooden ploughs and on the other hand mechanical ploughs.

If mechanical ploughs are found useful in increasing the output, there is another problem which should be faced; small holdings cannot afford such costy ploughs. But the roots of overcoming such a problem may be

7. Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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241 [243] found in what we have observed in a small village in Central Delta. To thresh corn the Egyptians use a special cart or wagon with sharp-edged iron wheels which is drawn either by one or two animals. This implement is used since a very long time in Egypt. Some five years ago the peasants of this village —and probably in many places in the Egypt — can hire a tractor of a rich neighbour, and let the tractor pull three to five threshing waggons, one behind the other. In this way a work of a week done by the slow animals and one cart, is done in a day or two by the quick tractor and the triple number of threshing waggons. In a similar way mechanical ploughs can be used. The spread of mechanical ploughs would end, among others, in the following results :

1. Quick ploughing would result in relieving many working hands for other periodic wage-labour, increasing thus the private income.

2. Relieving the animals from a part of their hard work, thus enabling Egypt to develop animal husbandry and dairy production.

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197
407*
103

Place of observation	Base	Share	Handle	Iron bands	handle grip	Beam
Upper Egypt :						
Mallawi (3) (+)	Wish	Sikke	Gafaien	Tog	Gabda	Gasaba
Garf Serban (2) (+)	•	•	•		•	•
Nazlet 'Abdalla (3) (+)	•	•	Dafaien	Dibel	Aadd	•
Aulad Mohamed (3) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	Dog	Gabda	•
El-'Ezbi (3) (+)	•	•	•	Tog	Rabba	•
Aulad 'Imran (3) (+)	•	•	•	•	Dabba	•
Abu Manna' (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	Gabda	•
Essaberiat (1) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kiman (3) (+)	•	•	•	Dibel	•	•
Harragia (2) (+)	•	•	•	•	•	•
El-'Ammari (1) (+)	Wagh	•	•	•	•	•
Nauasir (3) (+)	Wish	•	•	•	Magbad	•
Kelh (3) (+)	Wigh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Ramedi South (1) (+)	•	•	Gafaien	•	•	•
Benban (3) (+)	Wagh	•	Hadd	•	•	•
Baharif (3) (+)	Sikke	•	Rigil	•	Yadd	
Palestine :						
Southern area (2) ( ) (+)	Arbiya	Haseem	Romb		Hamama	Koo'
Libya :						
Tripoli (2) ( ) (+)	El-Layta	Sikka	Seluqina	—	Qarraga	Raqaba

(1) Ploughs observed by the author.
(2) Ploughs described by some students of the author (faculty of Arts, Ain-Shams Univ.).
(3) Ploughs described by H. A. Winkler pp. 153-158 (see references below).
(+) Double handle plough.
(=) Curved beam plough.
(+) One animal plough (usually garden plough). [241]
(++) Wheeled plough (usually used in sandy areas).
(+) I) Wheeled plough (usually for vegetables).
(= =) The first part of the beam, which is attached to the share is called Wasle, while the forked fore part of the beam is called Arish, and the whole is called Ous. see Winkler, H. A., p. 154.

Transcription :

ء	همزه	b	ح	b	ح	Sh	ش	s	ص						
d	ض	T	ط	'	ع	G	غ	q	ق						

) This Sign – on any vowel means elongation of the vowel.

[104]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: [192] bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often [776] long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmîye (thieves) and 'afārît (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullē ḫarâbe welina fiha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight [172] than with us. Moreover, Abu Gūrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an [262] important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after 512
the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys [782]
his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of [264]
bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt
fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, 512
especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies 513
down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady
spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets
become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does
he again move, when he begins the second portion of the [783]
day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, [782]
afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up [264]
during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed
and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with 512
the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is 461
again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings [782]
by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning
shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less 461
leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not over- [241]
work himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

241 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth down-
312 ward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20,
476] according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is
[887 left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their
857] ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious water-ing raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-
[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bàladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semàd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semàd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *ǵalālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363
443
291
342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

● 243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 312 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 823 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties 755

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] [152] [283] [415]

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the 243 789 978

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

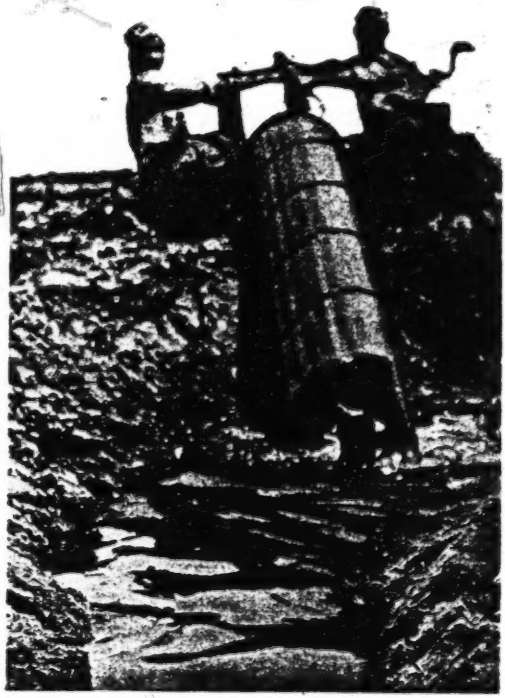

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [998] [965]

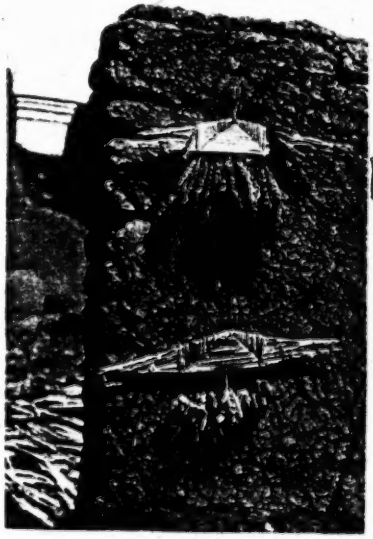

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

243 strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields
465 carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only.
465 The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

[492]
[465]
[431]

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also
501 to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village
465 lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and
505 labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[492]

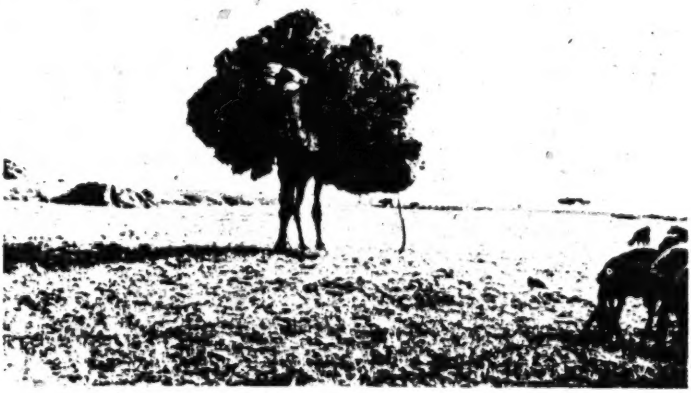

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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[492]
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243

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *ʿafārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *ʿafārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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[412]
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FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 106. WINNOWING

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FIG 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by 248
raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to 461
empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then 464
resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere [744] of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or [372] cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering 243
about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

● 243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

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465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_4$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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241 found in what we have observed in a small village in Central Delta.
[243] To thresh corn the Egyptians use a special cart or wagon with sharp-edged iron wheels which is drawn either by one or two animals. This implement is used since a very long time in Egypt. Some five years ago the peasants of this village —and probably in many places in the Egypt— can hire a tractor of a rich neighbour, and let the tractor pull three to five threshing waggons, one behind the other. In this way a work of a week done by the slow animals and one cart, is done in a day or two by the quick tractor and the triple number of threshing waggons. In a similar way mechanical ploughs can be used. The spread of mechanical ploughs would end, among others, in the following results :

1. Quick ploughing would result in relieving many working hands for other periodic wage-labour, increasing thus the private income.

2. Relieving the animals from a part of their hard work, thus enabling Egypt to develop animal husbandry and dairy production.

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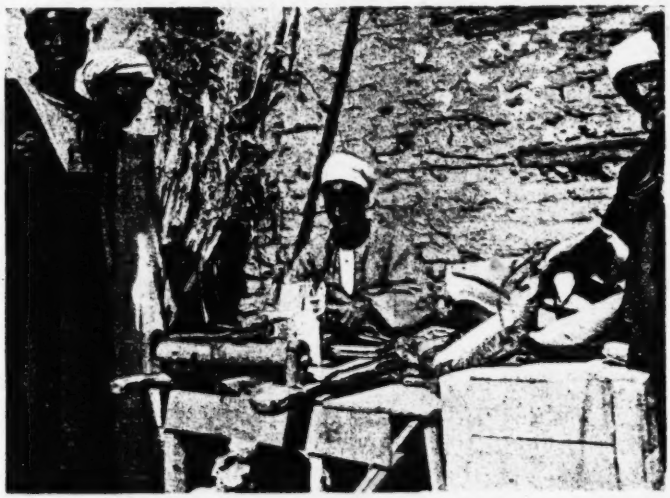
Spinning is, so far a I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have 283 seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, 462 when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn.

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made 252 by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the 462 latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and



[286] [299] [291] [14]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven [554] (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which [26] is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants.

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The ' fan ' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

49.

×539

Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar!
Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!
Lā'etni gamīle betitmaḥṭar,
we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri
5 *we-nādēt, ma ḥaddē gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
5 [And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of [244] them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmûd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half [426] of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied [492] together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According [415] to Maḥmûd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (44).

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

Those peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (44) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246 ●
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, [illegible]ed that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to [illegible] acceptable way, [illegible] have no mo[illegible]g

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([13]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([13]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 135] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([14]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer*, *febrayer*, *mâris*, *abrîl*, *myo*, *yûnyo*, *yûlyo*, *oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by 248
raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to 461
empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then 464
resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere [744] of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or [372] cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering 243
about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_2$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

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852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

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F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F ● [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([10]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([11]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

311
474
29b
133

Digging ditches

248
133

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

Page 160(D)

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

178 But we must at all costs avoid here even the appearance
121 of determinism. The fellah is no more the product of the Egyptian countryside than the countryside is the product of the fellah. There is no question here of inevitability, or any determining influence. Man is free, and this freedom is to be defined as "the power of self-determination".

Man is free, and cultivation remains contingent on his will. There are infinite possibilities, among which the will of man — not of the fellah, but of his master — chooses this or that, according to circumstances. At one time, the vine was grown on Egyptian soil. Grapes make wine, and the
241 veto of the Koran killed the vineyards. Not long ago, vast
249 areas were planted with tobacco, but the Government has now forbidden this. Maize of American origin, and cotton, introduced in the nineteenth century, are now chief among the crops. Tomorrow some new crop may cover the fields. No law of necessity, whether of climate or soil, determines once and for all the agriculture of Egypt; much less, then, human life. At the same time the climate and vegetation of Egypt exert a characteristic influence on those who live in, and on, the country.

181 In the case of the town-dwellers and industrial workers,
183 the bond between nature and man is looser; the impress
132 of the physical environment is softened and neutralised by the
133 stronger social, civic and political influences. This makes
121 these classes less stable, but more progressive.

The countryman, on the other hand, is moulded directly by the soil. Febvre justly criticises the generalisations of Ratzel and Brunhes on the influence of physical environment (4); but without granting their theories anything like universal applicability we may recognise that they do apply sufficiently to agricultural communities, and especially to the Egyptian fellaheen.

It will become clear, indeed, that the monotony, uniformity and productiveness of the Nile Valley have their exact counterpart in the characteristics of the fellah community. These two are not parallel but correlative. They meet and crystallise in a distinct manner of life, which is at once a geographical and a social phenomenon. It will also become clear that the water and mud of the Nile enter into and in great part explain the whole life of the fellah, his work and his home, his body and his soul, and impart

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 27]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([illegible]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([illegible]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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[464
857]

and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651]

27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249
136]

28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465]

29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249]

31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735]

33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302]

38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251 ●
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [174]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

340 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [748] [965]

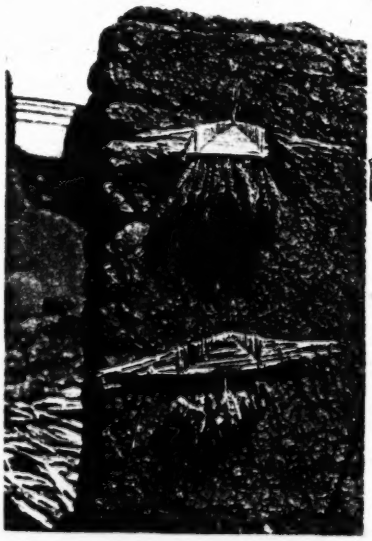

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at 256

[462] [291] [241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 776 755 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C 755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F 755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure. The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

F 752 751

F 755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

F [776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's* [386] house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366 contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an [443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, [illegible] *The Tikopia*, p. 33.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are [252] engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [744] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 794 788 533 531 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 252 775 356 782 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

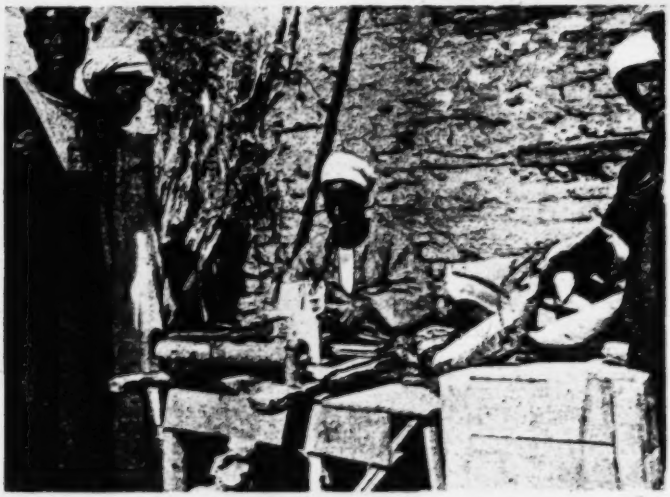
E 765 775 793 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462



[286] [299] [291] [14a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

252 462 [392] oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

[286] [291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 252

443 [423] Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof. [252]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Every one who brings
goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *ḳafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

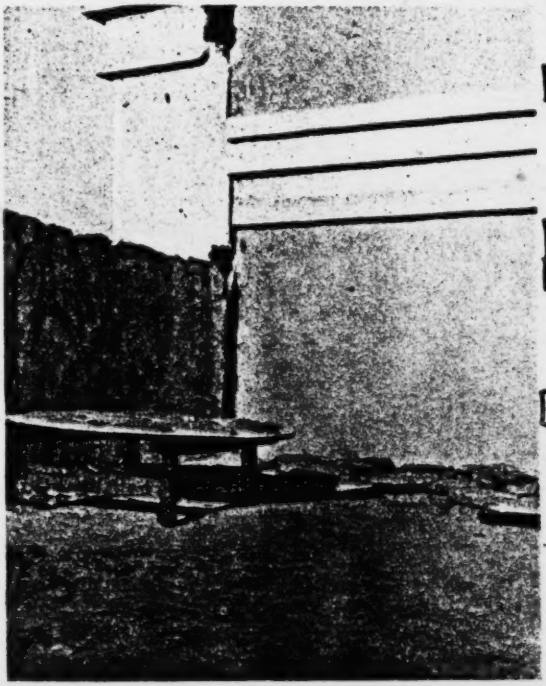


FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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F 776 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this 765 character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C 755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F 755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure. The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

F 752 751

F 755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

F [776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

757 to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

755 Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

[291]

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

[789] [255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessed ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 372 782

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F [791] [291]
E 264 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Ḥasan and elsewhere [1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

FA 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [172]

FIG. 175. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt [3]

FA 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

FA 241 423

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings [6]

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.
[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt. Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (44), both of

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoos-sa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread[43].

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three
252 inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (40) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. [164 167 702]

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

361
185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS, Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

ʿĒb ʿalēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

×539
527
821
[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband ʿAli, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

ʿAli, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast; for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl ʿAli u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-ʿaginha ʾuddamha.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanieh*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nuedra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

796 [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [443] [252] [521] [526]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at 256

[462] [291] [241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [604] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [477] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the [299] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [291] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such 178 as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by [609] outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [592] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'. 000 626

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself. 146 261

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread. 262 [594] [586]

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop. 251 602 621 [926]

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal. 264

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the 264 594

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 190.

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open tosuspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'. 000 626

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself. 146 261

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread. 262 [594] [586]

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop. 251 602 621 [426]

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal. 264

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the 264 594

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

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Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages: 843 [842] [115]

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage. [753]

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period. [826]

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth. [262]

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain- [627]

[p. 86 is blank]

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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [183] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [076]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [080] [055] [082]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands. 852 304

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment. [300] [534] [431] [144]

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent. [292] [152] [842]

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice. [262]

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree 852

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

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875 the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

872 Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan"', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers
[156] from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since
[264] the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[262] [2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

However, many of the benefits of compulsory education have been vitiated by the policy of cheap education for the poor. The theory and practice of compulsory education makes this quite obvious. Theoretically, the main purpose has been to train the child in the three R's, and to enable him to understand and to appreciate those principles of social life compatible with his own position, and to lead a good and contented life.[1] In practice, the mark of poverty is even more obvious, comparing the building equipment and teachers' salaries of compulsory schools with those of primary and secondary schools. Up to 1948, the latest year for which statistics are available, the appropriations for compulsory elementary education never exceeded 30 per cent of the total expenditure on other types of schools, while it amounted to almost 70 per cent in other countries such as France, the Netherlands, Ireland and England, bearing in mind, of course, that most of these countries had finished a long time ago with the initial expenses on building and equipment.[2] On the other hand, about 10 per cent of the educational expenditure in Egypt in 1936 was devoted to higher education at the University level, while the expenditure in the European countries previously mentioned amounted in the same year to 4 per cent and 6 per cent at the same level. The year 1936 is not an unusual one, as it represents the proportion of educational expenditure which is one of the main reasons for the top-heaviness of the Egyptian educational system, or as it is usually branded, 'the inverted pyramid'.[3]

Thus to throw the blame of the failure of the compulsory school on to the apathy of the fellah is to make a confusion of issues and an easy way out for those who do not think that education is a commodity to be sold, and that such a commodity must be desirable, useful, or appealing in some ways to the customer. Up to 1948 the compulsory elementary school was a separate world in two respects: separate from the real life of the rural population, and separate from the other types of schools which command

Item of food	*Quantity*
Bread	100 grammes
White cheese	10 "
Tomatoes	60 "
Nuts (fool soudani) ..	30 "
Salt	1 "
Cooked beans (fool mudammis)	80 "
Oil (No. 1)	10 "
Dried dates	60 "
Boiled eggs	1

[1] *Year Book of Education*, 1939, article by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education on 'Education in Egypt', p. 748.

[2] See *Annuaire Internationale de l'Education et de l'Enseignement*, 1939. The writer is aware of the difficulties involved in such a comparison, but the differences are so striking that they are certainly significant.

[3] See the writer's M.A. thesis on 'An Enquiry into Inequalities of Educational Opportunities in Egypt' (London University, 1949, unpublished).

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX II

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Amsheer	Fourth irrigation of some wheat sections. Last cutting of clover. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for the summer crop.
Baramhat	Harvesting of barley and beans. Harvesting of early grown wheat.
Baramoudah	Harvesting of wheat. Clearing the land, and preparing soil by digging or ploughing it for the summer crop. By the end of the month the millet is sown.
Bashans	*The Summer Crop* First irrigation of millet after fertilizing. Second irrigation, as millet requires water every fifteen days.
Baoonah	Breaking up the soil, and weeding. Second irrigation after fertilizing. Third irrigation at the end of the month.
Abeeb	Fourth irrigation with fertilizer for weak plants. Fifth irrigation for some plants. Boys begin to collect fertilizer for winter crop.
Miari	Harvesting.

The calendar gives the main crops which practically every farmer in the village grows and which constitute his diet of wheat and barley bread in summer, and millet bread in winter. Apart from these, clover (berseem) forms the main feeding-stuff for the domestic animals in the winter, while chaff and the millet plant leaves serve as fodder in summer.

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[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product		*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs	..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

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APPENDIX III

Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar	.	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

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APPENDIX III

In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

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APPENDIX VIII

trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless. [159] [125]

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.) [262]
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them.

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'. [369]

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 ●262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn ibliz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

844 463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

E 302 852 798

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāḥ* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīt*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

E [29] [532] [142]
E [264]
E [475] [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 885 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 885 845

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
188 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḳḳ*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḳḳ 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
775 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

[286] [299] [291] [190]

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants [554] [260]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

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oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

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FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *fafīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

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The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes.

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sidi Aḥmed el-Bedawi is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Tanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
782 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarîbeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarîbeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *barlach* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 70 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

539 **The Work of Women is better than that of Men; or, the Ideas of Women are Superior to those of Men**

Once upon a time a judge had a wife who was always telling him that he invariably gave judgment in favour of men and never of women. To this accusation the judge replied, "Oh, my dear wife, I think that women are very inferior to men; they are always in need of our help."

As the judge continued to pay no attention to what his wife said, she became angry with him, and said to herself, "I will find a way in which to punish my husband."

[269] So one day the wife told her husband to buy some meat and a melon for dinner. After she had prepared these things a friend came, and she offered *him* the meat for his dinner and cooked some lentils for her husband's meal, to take the place of the meat which she had given to her friend. She then cut out the inside of the melon and poured water inside the rind, which had been left whole. She brought also some fish and put them inside the melon-rind in the water.

When her husband came to take his dinner as usual she brought him the lentils.

He was much surprised when he saw this, and said to her, "What is the matter? I bought meat, not lentils."

So she said to him, "This is all that you bought; you must eat it." So he ate.

After he had eaten the lentils she took a knife and began to cut the melon into pieces, and then started laughing. Her husband said, "What is the matter with you?" She replied, "My dear husband, you must come and see the fish which are in this melon."

The man was very surprised to see such a curious thing, and he went outside his house, where there were some people sitting, and said to them, "I have bought a melon inside which there are fish. I shall invite you to eat some of these fish to-morrow."

The next day he sent out his invitations to the people who had promised to dine with him on the fish. When the guests arrived he said to his wife, "Bring the fish!" So she came forward and said, "O my husband, do fish live in melons? What is the matter with you? O people, you must perceive that the judge has become mad!" So they took him to the asylum and made some one else judge in his place.

When they asked the poor man every day the names of the days of the week he repeated them correctly, but when they asked him, "Where do fish live?" he replied, "Fish live in melons."

One day the woman went to visit her husband and said to him, "When they ask you 'Where do fish live?' you must say, 'They live in water, in ponds and rivers and lakes.'" Then they let him go free, and when he arrived at his house the people came to salute him.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 "and," he continued, "I think, therefore, that we should give her your daughter to be her son's wife."

The King followed this counsel, and sent a message to the camel that he was ready to give him his young daughter. So the camel caused a notice to appear in the papers that he was about to marry the King's daughter, and he invited some of his friends and gave them a supper. After supper they went to the King's palace and brought the bride to the camel's house.

Then the camel placed a sword between him and his bride, and said to her, "I am going to show you a secret thing." Then he took off his skin, and, behold! he was a very beautiful fairy prince with golden hair.

At daybreak the mother of the bride made some nice biscuits for her daughter and also prepared a dish of macaroni, suspecting that the camel [242] would eat it instead of straw. When she came to her daughter to offer her these things, she asked her about the camel. The daughter said, "It is a camel, my mother, not a human being," and did not tell her mother what she had seen at night.

Before the camel went out he brought his wife a gold tray on which were golden dishes full of delicious food, and he ordered her to offer her mother some breakfast, which she was to take to the King's palace.

When the King saw these precious things he was much astonished, and said to his vizier, "Surely this camel is a very rich man; he always offers us precious things which we do not possess."

On the seventh day after the marriage, as is the custom to the present day, the King and his wife took some beautiful presents to offer to their daughter. When they reached the place they found that the cottage was burned down and that no one was to be seen. But the camel had taken his wife, his mother, and his father and had gone to a distant place, where, after he had prayed to God, a beautiful palace, built of gold and silver bricks and surrounded with flowers, arose upon the spot. The palace, also, was protected by a large number of soldiers. Then the camel took off his skin and became the prince of these parts.

After a while the King and his vizier wandered about, dressed as Arabs, trying to find the King's daughter. One day they were passing near the palace when they were observed by the Prince, who ordered one of his soldiers to bring in these strange men, who, he said, doubtless were thieves. And they were cast into prison.

After three days had passed the men were brought before the Prince, and he asked, "Where were you going?" The King and his vizier replied, "We have a daughter whom we married to a camel, and we are trying to find her." The Prince asked, "How can a camel marry a girl?" And the King answered, "I gave him my daughter."

While they were thus speaking the King's daughter looked out of a

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rotls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [262] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *baladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 372] which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 439] Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle-class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 242] attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoosa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fūl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fūl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (").

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (").

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk ('*asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 27]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoosa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*basal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) ("), both of

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoosa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread(11).

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper
252 one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day.

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed ? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (**) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition.

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it.

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *mazrûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

7

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawlid*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amir*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
176 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
163 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. 117 [515 520]

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T.*—At Akhmim and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [238]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health: REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924.

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty': EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [435]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

244 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS. Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who
● 242 visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, CORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine
[252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOIKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEIS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This
[527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the
[496] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAHA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (مربع قلقاس).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [191]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Ṣia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed].
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmūd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

6. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often [192] [776] long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afārīt (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullī ḫarābe wa-lina fīha 'afrīt, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight [172] than with us. Moreover, Abu Gūrāb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fūl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an [262] important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8.Schaefer A-3 (1900-1901) 1904
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14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their [858] parents, but are also their dearest treasures.

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫai, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arnē fūl aḫḍar.
Leḥne 'izāz,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
niḥaṭṭē fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a [291] pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment.

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, [262] note on l. 11.

3. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but [301] he is fond of having it seen.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539x 461 [264] [262]

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes.

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'bā-l-'afa-lla!
rawwaḥ, ya mirsāl, 'dwaḍak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

---

d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Maḥmūd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min rādi
wi-t'āl: el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

8;Schaefer A-S (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Calls of the Radish-Vender.

539*
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar". (F. Kern.) [114 538]

Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
5 *nuṣṣ el-balad tishad-li,*
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
5 Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

CONTINUED
ON
NEXT FICHE

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

55.

Arrogance.

×539 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ruzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Mohammed 'Ali exterminated. For Mahmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

[114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebī' er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ṛuzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ṛuzz (Mamaluke).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

Flatteries.

75.

x539
832

Ya naʿme, ya belīle,
Yammū šaʿūr, ya ṭawīle.

Thou tender one, so like belīle!
Thou, with the abundant hair, thou slender one!

1. Belīle is a favorite dish prepared from corn, milk and honey. The sweetheart is compared with this delicate, sweet dish.

76.

Again, as in the preceding song, slender women are meant.

Ya naḫletēn el-ʿalāli,
ya balaḥkum dawa!

O ye two palms of the upper chamber,
Your dates are medicine!

Dalman has also these two lines, as a refrain to a love-song. In Dalman's song they run thus (p. 249):

Ya naḫlāt bi-l-ʿalāli	O ye palms of the upper chambers,
ya balaḥḥum dawa	O their dates are medicine,
Ya nūr il-ʿēn.	O light of the eyes!

Dalman heard the song on a steamer running between Bērût and Alexandria.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 513 [783] [782] [779] In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his 512 264 [272] [276] [265] [262] pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, 512 461 [509] and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. [521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire [574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the 512 [539] other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is [62] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted [782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

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After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

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FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed. 796

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices. 796 262 [621]

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month 796 [785]

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his 796
nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of [788]
reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the
usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging
of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the
dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at
other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed;
numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, [443]
have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night,
cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and
old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can [765]
now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee [762]
or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also
sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread,
or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the 538
by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, some-
times bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by [534]
scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master
of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the
innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws [533]
from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boy-
hood and the time when we received our first music lessons
on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There
the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and
poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses,
the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his
viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which
form the material for every one of those tales, the number
of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore
—purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with 796
more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "pre- 574
pares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats
them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour pre-
vails, and at no time the whole year through does the
Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of
Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes
a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[267] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[982] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
776 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the 796 start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash [783] themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorâk*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

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The low 000

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters. 582

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown. 583 [584] [586] 421

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle. 585 [262]

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall. [515]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar		..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 787 755 787 [263] [289]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [176] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoossa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins.[1] A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread[1].

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three
252 inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

22.

Swing-Song.

539x
527
857

This song is said to be sung by girls, as they swing at the "great feast". They are teasing friends who are standing near.

The "great feast" ('Id el-kebîr) also designated by the Turkish name Korbân Beirâm, is celebrated about two months and a half after the more important "little feast", which ends the holy fast-month Ramadân. At the time of the "great feast", even the poorest must have a piece of meat, for it is celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. [796]

Like all feasts, the "great feast" is celebrated with much noise and merriment. Swings are rarely lacking at the place of the feast.

Ya ḫai, rīḥet hudūmak
zēi kaḥk el-'īd,
ma'gūm-bi-šēbe u-kafūra
u-samnê gedīd.

Brother, the odor of thy garments
Is like feast-cakes,
Kneaded with wormwood and camphor
And fresh fat.

3. Such strange spices as wormwood and camphor are actually baked in these sweet feast-cakes, which are general favorites (compare No. 20, l. 9). Camphor is put, for instance, into coffee. [263]

[P.24 is blank]

117.
Light Minded.

×539

Ummāli ē? ummāli ē?
āḫod el-fellaḥ: aʿmil-bo ē?
āḫod el-gindi
abu šāl hindi.
5 *Hūwa yeṛanni*
wanarudd ʿalê.

Of course, what else? Of course, what else?
If I take the peasant, what shall I do with him?
I will take the soldier
With the Indian shawl.
5 He shall sing
And I shall answer him.

118.
Dost Thou Think of Me?

Yasmar, yabu ʿēn ʿasalīye,
garḥê hawāk itmakkan fīye.
Yasmar, yabu-l-libās eṣ-ṣīni,
ana ʿala bālak wala-nte nāsîni.

Thou brown one, with the honey-brown eyes,
The wound of thy love is fast fixed in me.
[291] Thou brown one with the dainty drawers,
Dost thou remember me, or hast thou forgotten me?

[263] 1. Egyptian honey is much darker than ours.
[177] 3. Literally: "Chinese under drawers". Chinese is used here as Indian is in Nos. 56 and 117.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" – the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'nagrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy [illegible] the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—[illegible] the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

I: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
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264 594 [562] girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

[788] The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

796 769 The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

574 Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

264 621 [688] There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

[241] At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relation-
[831] ship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands
[269] after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various
[56] chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes cer-
[462] tain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain.
[33] She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it
264 was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness
[805] and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

852 The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is
304 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the
[264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

243
431
264
789

threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[492]

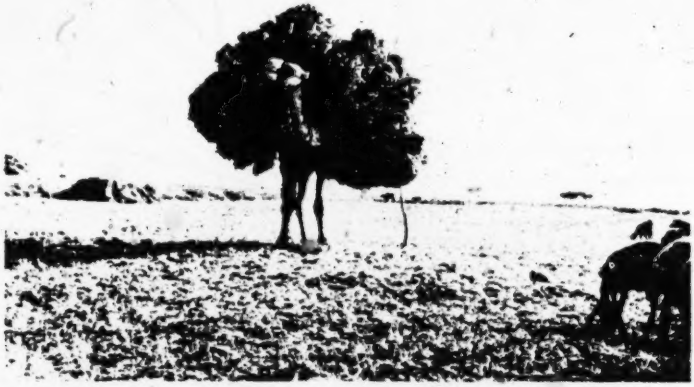

FIG. 192. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

FIG. 193. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

789
782
776

around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to viṣit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *ʿafārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

F 776 372 782

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say "*Dastūr*" ("Permission") or "*Dastūr yā mubārakīn*" ("Permission, O blessed ones"), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F [791] [29]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F E 264 ● 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say "In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

964 The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [969] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F A 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

F A 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

F A 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

F A 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

F A 849

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoos-sa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread[4].

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three
252 inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

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After his
512 evening devotions the dweller in the town moves
264 homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting
262 him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to
[915] him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of
[252] dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchich* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchich, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians,
[104] with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

512 After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less
[519] frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties
may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and [533]
wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [535]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its
court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri-
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [782]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [771]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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562 [512] again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are [834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harim* (singular *hurme; hárem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im- [554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that [834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already [171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up [184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its [554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed, [195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the [834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common [264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his [783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, [264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the 888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[302] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
796 [852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their cus-
[202] tomers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[785] the fast has now come to an end. After supper everybody goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [560]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analysis]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539x
461
[264]
[262]

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes.

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'bā-l-'afa-lla!
rauwaḥ, ya mirsāl, 'awaḍak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

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d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Maḥmûd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min ṛādi
wi-t'ūl: el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521 In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kam?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[117] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

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with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (44) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. [164 167 702]

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
276 before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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796 Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of [788] reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, [443] have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can [765] now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee [762] or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the 538 by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by [534] scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws [533] from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

796 In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "pre- 574 pares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them ! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem ; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves ; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and [515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (46).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water
● 271 that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as
823 not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river
823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tig, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn. 271 312

The creation of model villages has been more tempting to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest. 361 185 654

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

744 to provide public conveniences, in the effort to combat the diseases which lessen the fellah's output ? The Ministry of Public Health, founded in 1934, has given this question priority in its programme, but it has not a large budget, and most of its income goes to pay the salaries of its officials. It has, however, some genuine achievements to its credit. Sixty-seven dispensaries, permanent or travelling, are fighting bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. There are as many hospitals, with about four thousand beds in all, for serious illnesses. In 1936 there were 111 eye-clinics, which had treated 1,133,599 patients. Infant welfare is organised in some forty centres. Doctors, midwives, and visiting nurses, instead of waiting for the peasant woman to come and ask for help, go round from house to house to give treatment and advice. At least half a million visits have been made. By 1937 there were about five thousand certified midwives, who had taken a six months' course in a maternity hospital, and eight thousand of the second class, who had from three to six weeks' training.

744 To these splendid efforts must be added the even more
747 devoted labours of private institutions : the dispensaries and home visits of the Franciscan Sisters of Egypt and the many other Catholic sisterhoods, the Protestant foundations, such as the C.M.S. and the American Mission, and the more recent and methodical 'social centres' established in a dozen villages in the Delta.

It is a vast field, and these efforts up to the present have affected only thousands out of millions. Even those fortunate few often lose the benefit of their medical treatment through their ignorance, their unhygienic habits, and their poverty. These are the obstacles to progress.

183 A model village has no power to make the fellah a healthy
744 man, immune from sickness. The work of the authorities in the provinces is hardly more succesful. So long as the fellah keeps his present ways of thought and the ignorance that hinders him from knowing what is good for him and what is not, he will remain, in spite of all the improvements
● [271 that are offered him, exactly as he is today. He will refuse
356] filtered water and drink the impure water his fathers drank. Give him a light, airy, healthy dwelling, and he will pervert it to his own manner of life. He will still be unable to
183 profit from the laws and institutions provided to help him.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

×539 461 [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballaṣ aḥḍar u-melān!
Ya giḏʿān, iḏʿu rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray [192] (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsĕ higgi, balāš dalāʿa;
di šuṛlĕ mīri wa-la fīšĕ šafāʿa.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar	.	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [072] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 264.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [276]

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, F C 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo(44). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Im-
[439 ports have tripled in a few years. The Government has
65] also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (46).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

113

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

Another Contrast.

539×
574
554

104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gani abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
5 *wazemzem-lo-l-fingāl*
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
5 And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
512 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
264 breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[272] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[266] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from
[265] the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and [533]
wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [535]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [182]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [171]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [943]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analysr]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [32]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo(44). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Im-
[439 ports have tripled in a few years. The Government has
651] also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

112.

x539
832

Gāi min beʿīd yitmaḫṭar,
wil-lūli ʿala ṣudro itbaḥtar.
Hāt el-mudām, ya ḫilli, u-nuskar,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām.

She comes, in the distance, with swaying gait,
And the pearls are scattered o'er her breast.
[273] Bring forth the wine, my dearest, we will drink ourselves drunk,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep.

1. See Note on l. 2, No. 111.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [298]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
[1 [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[779] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[773] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

Average consumption is then:			*Price in £E*
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs		..	6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

		£E
Clothes	..	4
Tea and sugar	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.	..	1
		£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [276]

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, F 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (46).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [445
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751] performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the '*omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

113

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppenents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

But in 773

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, 121 and since the *Shabshaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were 276 accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have 114 seen that *ḥashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *ḥashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥira. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*, just as the *Shaikha Khaḍra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shisha*.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 513 [783] [782] [779] In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his 512 264 [272] [276] [265] [262] pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, 512 461 [539] works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. [521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire [574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the 512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn [539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is [621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted [782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties
may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its
court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri-
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [182]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [171]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

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FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity. 778 789 [231] 853

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted. [191] 789 [825] 842

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness. [824]

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose. 574 842 [789]

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive. 842 278 [754]

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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164 515 854 are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

757 278

[756] [755] [291]

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

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juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear. 757 278

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt 757 755

[754] 278 755

FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

[1] Sulphate of zinc.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 278 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F C 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

755

[789]

[855]

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

753 757 278

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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753 757 978 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then [764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

978 757 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a little longer.

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

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lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared. 757 278

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better. 757 171

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment! 757 [372]

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again. 752 278

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able 757

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

F [515] [823]

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

F 796 789 278

F C [297]

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

F [576]

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

C 796

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions (**). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers, and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 785
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swellings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment clearly depends on what plants they have within reach, and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing original in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fellaheen are even more effective than their manner of life in isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which 'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these ritual observances.

I

THE TAḲRĪFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. 164 It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it 757 forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats 755 a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him before her with his lower extremities extended, while she remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way. Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great force, the result of which is often death. She does all this without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an "operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient. (We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault. because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it) Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture [278] of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there 756 is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not 755 order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

THIS word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

755 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any
776 slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

756 "Said an old hag, There has come to me
787 A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
[539] Come ye to him, and come again soon,
796 That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife"
755 enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and
776 remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients
787 with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has
• 398 requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

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And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
878 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wood dipped in powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

This is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or ~~four~~ fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

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Many women

756 in the villages are famed for the "cure" of them. One of them is known as Sitt Umm Ḥusain. She resides in the village of Ibrāhīm Aghā in the district of Shubrakhīt. Her "specific"
757 is to take a piece of the hollow stalk of the bamboo (*ghāb Fārisī*), and split it lengthways down the middle, and place in it the skin of the patient's eyelid. In view of its flexibility it squeezes upon the eyelid and hinders its nourishment, so that it becomes violently inflamed, perhaps extending to the neighbouring parts, and destroying the eye. The result[1] of this ill-omened treatment is that the part squeezed becomes affected
[164] with gangrene, the eyelid becomes separated from the eyeball, and the latter becomes exposed to all external influences, great, and small, there being now nothing to protect it from injury, not to mention that the patient through this "operation," becomes ugly and hideous, the sight of him frightening children and offending grown up people.

Many others besides Sitt Umm Ḥuṣain there are who go round the villages rooting out eyelids as if they thought Allah created them unintentionally.

XXVIII

HEALING OF THOSE BORN BLIND (CATARACTOUS)

757 A NATIVE of Mandūra in the Gharbīya Province claims that
278 he has done some of the things for which Jesus (on whom be peace !) was noted, and has made the blind to see (or, rather, to describe him by what results from his works, he gives those who have eyes, eyes to see). What he does is, he anoints the ophthalmic patient with *koḥl*, which he makes himself, and in ten days he is "cured."

I was informed by one of the leading people of the Buḥaira Province about some antimony [*koḥl*] which he bought from

[1] [Dr. A. F. MacCallan, writing in the *Egyptian Gazette* (April 7th, 1927) on the development of Ophthalmology in early Arabic Literature mentions this popular Fellahīn "cure," and adds: "*The trichiasis entropion is occasionally cured* (by this method), *but always at the expense of a shortened upper lid, and the frequent production of lagophthalmos.*" Tr.]

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *koḥl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarītī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]

(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *shūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *koḥl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awshar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]

[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]

[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *habbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XII, 207. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

EF 756 755

the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, "Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī Shaukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began "treating" his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

EF [164] [278]

Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

EF 756 278

After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

[1] [See note above p. 43.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
EGYPT MR1

EF 756 878

drugs, salts and acids and alkalis with labels, on which were written their names in Latin, in very indistinct letters on account of their age. The bystander could not help suspecting that this was merely the leavings of some pharmacist, which this man had bought up after the death of the owner.

On turning my head to the right I saw written on one of these bottles "sulphuric acid," so I asked his lordship about the contents of the bottle, in order to try him, that it might put an end to my suspicions regarding him. He answered straightway, "This is oil of mandragora, or apples of the Jinn." Then he produced a vessel gilded on the outside and said, "This is the *Koḥl* (stibium) of the Forty. It puts and end to obscuration of the surface of the eye, and I produced it myself by boiling it in oil of rose mixed with the grease of serpents forty times." He generously presented each of us with some to experiment with, but when we had left his dwelling we threw what was in our hands on the ground, except one of us who was determined to try it. He put a little of it in his eye, and the next day was afflicted with ophthalmia of the cornea which took him fifteen days' treatment to get over its evil effects.

Mark the difference, O you who are intelligent and skilful, between the dwelling of this ignoramus aping the physician and [p. 61] the clinic of one of our keen native doctors. You will find the difference distinctly visible. While the former rejoices in success and prosperity, the latter suffers ill-luck and neglect.

XXX

HEADACHE (ṢUDĀ')[1]

F 164 753

THIS is applied to many illnesses, but is only rarely an original illness. It arises from decay in the bone of the occiput,

[1] [Professor E. G. Browne, in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine* mentions (p. 4) that this noun of pain appears in the Latin version of the Kānūn of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) as Soda (*Sermo universalis de Soda*), a term which must have bewildered those without the Arabic original. Tr.]

The manner of it is this: The "old wife" orders the windows of the sick room to be closed first of all. Next she orders him not to eat anything but thin bread and honey during the space of ten days. On the eleventh day a large fire is kindled in the sick room [p. 84] and the "old wife" places on it her incense (which consists of pieces of sulphate of natural mercury) that is, cinnabar [*zungafr*, or sulphuret of mercury]. There goes up a thick vapour which fills the emptiness of the room. Then the "old wife" leaves her patient and goes out quickly that his punishment may be endured in solitude, since he inhales the quick poison of the fumes of the quicksilver flying about. I was informed by a trustworthy person that one patient died after two hours of the "fumigating," though, before it, he was fairly well, his illness not being dangerous or fatal. This mistake is common in all the districts of Egypt. And no matter how the "old wife's" methods or herbs may vary, they do not produce the desired effect nor any part of it, unless indeed the object of destruction. It is suitable, in the most expeditious manner, for that.

XLI

'ISHBA

As some obtain a "cure" by incense, others, both men and women, dispense with medicine by means of *'ishba* (sarsaparilla), which is too well-known to be named here, even children know it by heart, for they think that in it is a divine secret opposed to syphilis. But they are wrong, seeing that is has no use at all to-day as far as we know. Some people reckon it itself and sassafras, and guaiacum [lit. "wood of the prophets"] to be of the herbs causing sweat, but in my opinion, tea is better than any of them.

It is quite certain that the bulk of the *fellāḥīn* in these days know the truth of what we have said, because of its inefficacy, and that they have turned aside from it. Nowadays they know

another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

"MIXING" (MADHAḲ)

Madhaḳ literally means "mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. And they "prescribe" for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this "method" is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (أم الرأس) "mother of the head"], and there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

[1] [This "mixing" or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

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XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-khartīt*) consists of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the ass, and one of the " doctors " beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the " sagacious ones " enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of " quacks " in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

Some women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *timûs*, for which I read *kimûs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (مطبوخ النارنج).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aṣwānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places.

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows.

In the Gharbīya province, in a village called *Kafr Khiḍr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Ṭanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

RHEUMATISM AND DONKEY MARROW

ONE of the ancient "prescriptions" successfully used for *Ḥidār* of the joints (i.e. rheumatism) is taking the marrow from the feet of a dead donkey and rubbing it on the part affected for seven days. They go to extremes in the matter until the patient is compelled to bring it from remote regions, after his family have set spies and observers in all the villages to inform them of the death of a donkey, male or female. Sometimes they employ the fat of a camel or serpent.

The true explanation. It is possible that in the spinal substance of the donkey's bone there may be a soothing element, which the learned have not yet discovered. But it is very improbable that there is an element counteracting or removing inflammation, since a patient told me that that marrow is not exciting or burning, but that it is like ordinary fat. Perhaps it may here have some effect on muscular rheumatism, but in [p. 15] the case of rheumatism of the joints it is of little use.

IV

THE UNIQUE ELEMENT (AL-GŌHAR AL-FARD)

THOSE who go back to what we wrote in the first part (page 24) concerning piles and dysentery (*rīḥ al-mash'ūmāt*) will know the secret of those fancies in the villages. But today the crowds of quacks are not satisfied with propagating their errors in the villages, but they go so far as to publish the same in the newspapers. I read in an Arabic newspaper an advertisement by a man called Abū 'Ujaiza of the village of Fīsha, residing in the dwelling of Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl in Ṭanṭā. He "cures" piles in the space of three days, at least,

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

 F 164 F 757

bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

E F 278 757

I was one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *muṣaṭṭaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūḳḳa* or *uḳḳa*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¼ lb. Tr.]

E [804]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
EGYPT MR1

E F 278 757

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*hiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

E F [832] [943]

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

F 164 757

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawalli* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XVII

"WINKING" (ṬARFA)

164 SLIGHT shocks falling upon the eye-ball cause irritation which often leads to a dangerous state on most occasions. All such afflictions arising from an external influence are named 957 by the common people *Ṭarfa*. They have sundry "cures" for it. One of these is effective for the time being. It consists of closing the eyelid and placing the hand outspread above it. Then another person puts his mouth to this hand and blows upon it with his foul breath, deep breaths one after the other. [958] Shortly after we see them ordering the milk of a woman to be brought and a drop placed in the eye. Then it is "cured."

The true explanation. As for the blowing upon the eye, it is of little account, since it has no real influence upon it. But milk has been used since ancient times for placing [p. 33] in the eye for all light irritations which occur therein. It is very good. Many *koḥl* manufacturers still order it even to-day.

The true treatment. The handiest and simplest thing for the patient is to boil a little Greek camomile [*bâbûnig Rûmî*] (or "the chickens of 'Ali's mother") and throw into that hot mixture a piece of tissue, which he places at once upon his eye for the space of a quarter of an hour for two hours. Remove all customary eye-salves. There is no harm in using human or animal milk, since it mollifies the inflamed condition. But if the eye is in a serious state, then the first thing is to hasten to an oculist.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be "cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 ḤASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his 752 numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when [171]
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [176]
away the *karîne*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [153]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and ter-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[BOYS] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [848] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN 883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

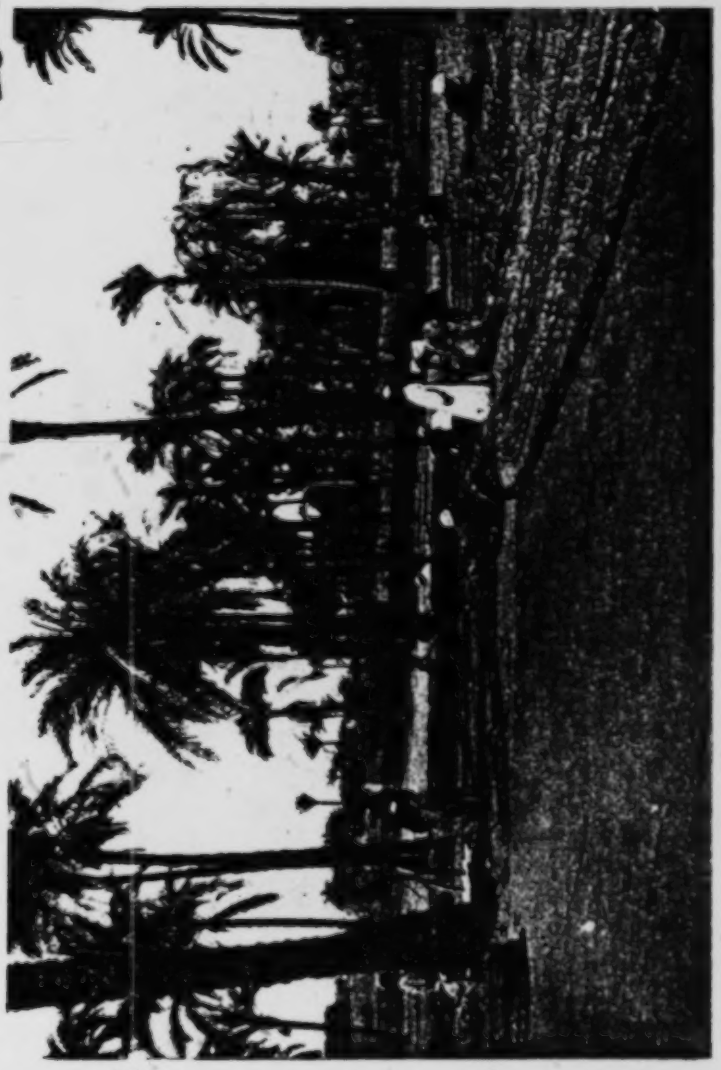
Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

137
283
291



ROPE-MAKING AT AKHMÎM

The man seated in the centre of the picture is twisting the split and softened strands into a thin cord. See p. 161.

[Facing page 1]
Frontispiece

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *kafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*lîf*). The *lîf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayûm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

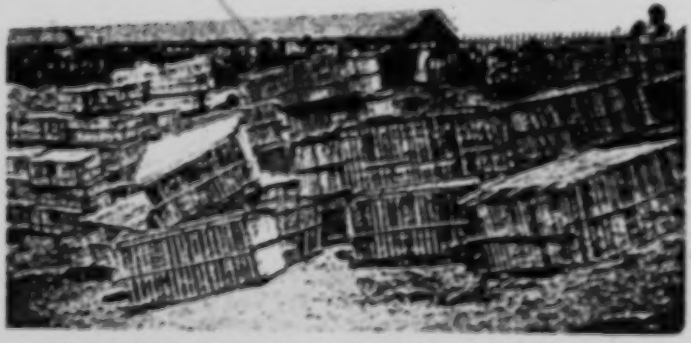


FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

286 344 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

[283] [291] [42] [516] [857]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 962

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 962

[286] [299] [291] [14 a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usualy eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26 a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] [152] [283] [415]

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is 243 employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of 789 the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. 978 These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 372 FA 285

may have been referring to the way in which cow-dung is made into cakes for fuel (p. 154) when he says:[1] "They take up dung with their hands."

Baskets of the same shape and same technique as the *maḳṭaf* (p. 156, Fig. 83) were made anciently, as can be seen from the photograph of such a basket found at el-ʿAmarneh (Fig. 174), and dating therefore from the Eighteenth Dynasty. Such baskets are constantly depicted in reliefs and paintings from the Third Dynasty onward, often as being carried, as at the present day, on the heads of the women.[2] Baskets of much the same shape and of the same technique as the Eighteenth-Dynasty baskets shown in Fig. 175 are woven at the present day (p. 159)—*i.e.*, they are made of palm-leaf with a foundation of split midribs and built up spirally with over-sewing.[3] In el-ʿAmarneh was found a basket tray[4] that is almost an exact replica of that depicted in Fig. 89, p. 161, while the two baskets, the one ancient and the other modern, shown together (Fig. 176) are also practically identical.

A [172]

FIG. 174. ANCIENT MAKṬAF
After T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, Pl. XXI, 4.

The *ḳafaṣ* (p. 160) was as much employed anciently as it is now, and is frequently shown in the ancient reliefs and paintings.[5] A bed made like a *ḳafaṣ*, and somewhat similar to that mentioned on p. 161, may be depicted in the Third-Dynasty tomb-chapel of Ḥesy.[6]

A [352]

Palm-fibre rope like that in use at the present day (see p. 161 and Frontispiece) has been found in tombs of all periods.[7]

FA 283

[1] ii, 36.
[2] See above, p. 299, and *cf.* p. 37, Fig. 14, p. 80, Fig. 38.
[3] See also W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 1.
[4] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXI, 3.
[5] *E.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh* (London, 1893), Part I, Pl. XXII.
[6] W. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1911–12: The Tomb of Hesy* (Cairo, 1913), p. 29 and Pl. XIX.
[7] See, *e.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), p. 33 and Pl. XXXIV.

A [113]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [865] [312]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [341]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 Beginning of responsibility with
[241] use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than
[264] sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" - the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of
[494] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my
[264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate
[264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends
[194] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *hasenah* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *karīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [480] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 859 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *mabjaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[865] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
291 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

[463] In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

[285]

789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes
852 the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. 385 [340] [291] [331] [462]

FIG. 83. BUILDING A WALL

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [485]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

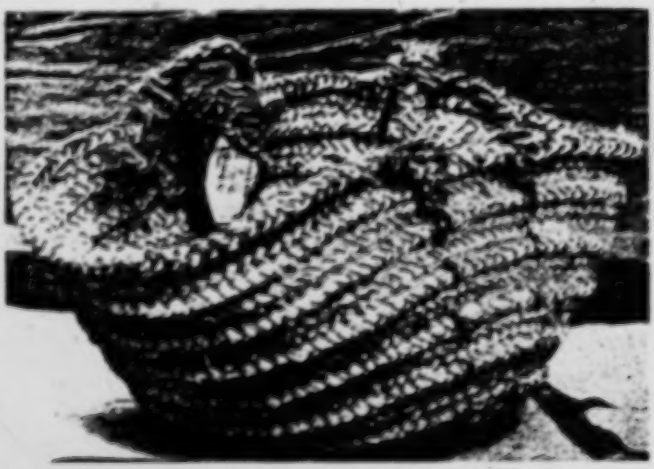

FIG. 83. A MAṢṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not.

The *maktaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Egyptian Oases MR12

F 285

same material, any ends that remain over being laced into the sides of the basket below either handle. The base of the basket on the outside is also sometimes reinforced with cord coils.

E 285

I should mention that a basket in my possession, from the oasis of el-Farāfreh, displays the same technique as the *maḳṭaf*. It is of very fine workmanship and the plaits are very small.

F 285 415 [460]

FIG. 85. BASKET-GRANARIES

A similar technique is employed in the making of basket-granaries. These are of great size, and are made, so I was told, exclusively by men and, so far as I know, in Fayūm Province only; I have never, as yet, come across them elsewhere. Numbers of them are sold at the weekly markets, and their size may be estimated by comparison with the height of the people standing near them in the photograph (Fig. 85). I have frequently seen these basket-granaries on the roofs of houses in Fayūm. Sometimes they are quite globular in shape and are entirely covered with clay, this being done, so one of my servants told me, to keep the wind and dust from penetrating through the interstices. Only when small pieces of clay have fallen off is the original structure of basket-work revealed. All the basket-granaries that I have seen are extremely well made, and are very strong.

F 285

Many baskets in use all over Egypt are made in the follow-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

ing way, the materials employed being taken from the palm-tree. 285

A number of the mid-ribs of palm-branches are split up lengthways, the leaves likewise. The basket-maker takes a certain number of the split mid-ribs, the number varying according to the required thickness of the coil, these forming a foundation. An iron needle, somewhat more slender than that used for the plaited baskets, is threaded with one of the split leaves, which is sewn over and over the foundation, almost, if not quite, concealing it. This type of basket is again built up spirally, each stitch being passed through the preceding coil (Figs. 86 and 87). Such baskets are made in a large variety of shapes, from flat, round trays to large receptacles with lids. They are often decorated with simple designs in colours, the leaves being, of course, dyed before they are sewn into the baskets. [531]

FIG. 86. UNFINISHED BASKETS, SHOWING METHODS OF WORKING

FIG. 87. BASKET WITH OPEN WAVY-LINE PATTERN

Some baskets, which I was told are made only in two small villages in Fayûm Province, have the base made in the way described above, while the sides show an open wavy-line pattern (Fig. 87). These also are made in a large variety of sizes and shapes, and are very attractive and decorative. The wavy line consists of mid-rib foundations closely bound round with the leaves. It must be remembered that both the leaves and the mid-ribs are fresh when the baskets are made, and are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 285 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no

F [460]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *kafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*lif*). The *lif* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

F 352
F 083
S [285]

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 344

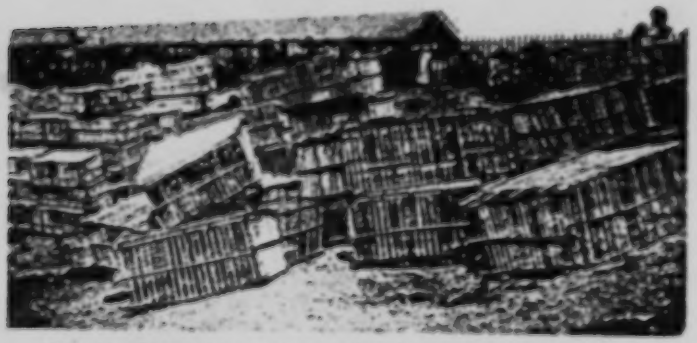


FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

F [085] [410]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 -
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nôrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [998] [965]

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 133 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 372

may have been referring to the way in which cow-dung is made into cakes for fuel (p. 154) when he says:[1] "They take up dung with their hands."

F A 285

Baskets of the same shape and same technique as the *maḳṭaf* (p. 156, Fig. 83) were made anciently, as can be seen from the photograph of such a basket found at el-ʿAmarneh (Fig. 174), and dating therefore from the Eighteenth Dynasty. Such baskets are constantly depicted in reliefs and paintings from the Third Dynasty onward, often as being carried, as at the present day, on the heads of the women.[2] Baskets of much the same shape and of the same technique as the Eighteenth-Dynasty baskets shown in Fig. 175 are woven at the present day (p. 159)—*i.e.*, they are made of palm-leaf with a foundation of split midribs and built up spirally with over-sewing.[3] In el-ʿAmarneh was found a basket tray[4] that is almost an exact replica of that depicted in Fig. 89, p. 161, while the two baskets, the one ancient and the other modern, shown together (Fig. 176) are also practically identical.

A [172]

FIG. 174. ANCIENT MAKṬAF
After T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, Pl. XXI, 4.

The *ḳafaṣ* (p. 160) was as much employed anciently as it is now, and is frequently shown in the ancient reliefs and paintings.[5] A bed made like a *ḳafaṣ*, and somewhat similar to that mentioned on p. 161, may be depicted in the Third-Dynasty tomb-chapel of Ḥesy.[6]

A [352]

F A 283

Palm-fibre rope like that in use at the present day (see p. 161 and Frontispiece) has been found in tombs of all periods.[7]

[1] ii, 36.
[2] See above, p. 299, and *cf.* p. 37, Fig. 14, p. 80, Fig. 38.
[3] See also W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 1.
[4] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXI, 3.
[5] *E.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bershek* (London, 1893), Part I, Pl. XXII.
[6] W. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1911–12: The Tomb of Hesy* (Cairo, 1913), p. 29 and Pl. XIX.
[7] See, *e.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), p. 33 and Pl. XXXIV.

A [113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 241 423

and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-ʿAmarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht.*[2]

FA 285 [192]

FA 407

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *ṭūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A [286 [532]

G [407]

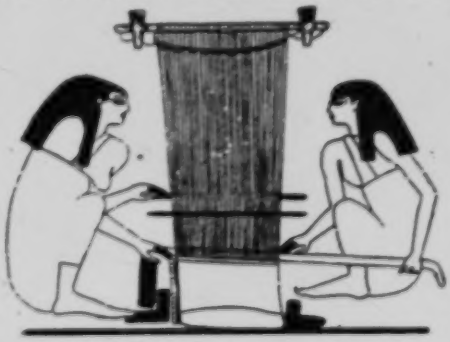


FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 17a.

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Koua, and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 285
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply ([41]).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *kafaṣ*.

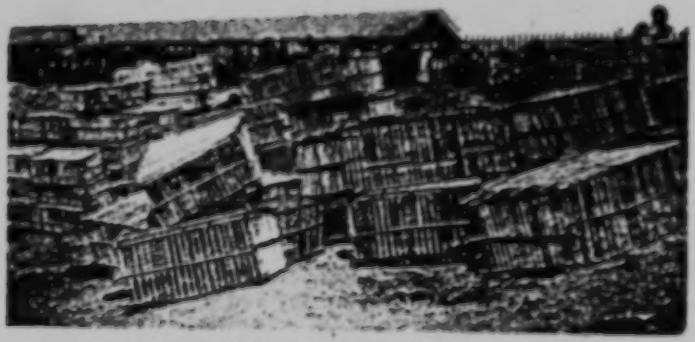
Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*lîf*). The *lîf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayûm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

F 352
F 083
S [085]

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 344



F [085] [417]

FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

286 344 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

283 291 192 516 857

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the wárp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 962

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 962

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

[286] [299] [291] [149]

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [269]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

252 462 [394] oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

[286] [291] The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is 262 252 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 [423] Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof. [252]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

to el-Lāhūn, in Fayūm Province. I photographed them in the monastery precincts after the service had taken place.

The festival of the Epiphany is celebrated by the Copts on either January 18 or 19. On the previous evening the men usually bathe in the Nile, holy water from a church having been poured into the river first. In some places a priest comes to the house of a Copt bringing a supply of holy water with him and also a small silver cross. A number of prayers are recited, and the *Kyrie Eleison* is repeated forty-one times, these repetitions being counted by means of a Coptic rosary, which contains forty-one beads. The whole assembly is then sprinkled with the holy water. This is a substitute for the bathing in the Nile.

On the following day, called *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, all the Copts repair to the cemeteries to visit the graves of their dead relatives. This visit is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, and many of the rites are similar to those observed by the Muslims at their *Ṭala'*. The following is an account of what I have myself witnessed at this ceremony, and is typical of all these celebrations in the country parts of Egypt.

The first thing to catch the eye on arriving at the Coptic cemetery was a large group of women indulging in a curious dance close to some of the graves. It was very similar to the dance after a death described in the chapter on funerary customs, and consisted of a stamping, circular movement, the women being closely packed together the whole time

The cemetery was crowded, and visitors on camels, donkeys, or on foot were constantly arriving. Others, having paid their tribute to the dead, were departing, wending their way to the various villages in the cultivated area. All this time the wailing never ceased. It was, to my mind, the most pathetic sound I had ever heard. The monastery made a picturesque background for the whole scene. Moreover, its walls afforded a welcome shelter from the sun for the horses, donkeys, and camels that were tethered beneath them.

The groups of mourners varied in size, some being quite large and consisting of about twenty people, possibly more. Occasionally a woman could be seen wailing in solitary grief. I noticed one such woman talking to her dead husband through a small hole pierced at one end of the tomb. Coloured silk handkerchiefs, similar to those used at all the funerary ceremonies of the Muslims, were in evidence. The graves, especially those with no super-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Hasan and elsewhere [1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

FA 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [173]

FIG. 175. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt.[3]

FA 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

FA 241

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings.[6]

423

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

A [113]

[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes. [286] [354]

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red". [826]

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd). [826]

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis 'agātak,
Ya miššaḥla' min dān aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nisma' ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḥla' refers to the coquettish movements in dancing and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent. [535]

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coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. 113 [515 526]

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T.*—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [609] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [477] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the [294] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the [291] older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by 178 outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village [609] economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [512] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
687 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be
[779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
562 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven' while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry [illegible] the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wi[illegible]i, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and 862 from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between 842 lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
„ 5–9 „	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
„ 10–19 „	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
„ 20–29 „	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
„ 30–39 „	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
„ 40–49 „	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
„ 50–59 „	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
„ 60–69 „	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
„ 70–79 „	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
„ 80–89 „	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
„ 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

882 With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the [826] house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

883 Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

882 Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends.

885 581 Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for 888 [891] instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from 857 their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

882 [1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

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The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl | Composed of two black 584
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [291]
with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in 585
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their 431
contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. 585
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- analyst]

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872 villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

[177] [291] A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

212 After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·6	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ROPE-MAKING AT AKHMÎM

The man seated in the centre of the picture is twisting the split and softened strands into a thin cord. See p. 161.

[Facing page 1]
Frontispiece

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

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443 454 carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

342 789 531 554 The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

363 137 342 291

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

744 The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

000 A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

357 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede 586
for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved 428
to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained 581
his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

[391] [192] 152 593

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife! [607]

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

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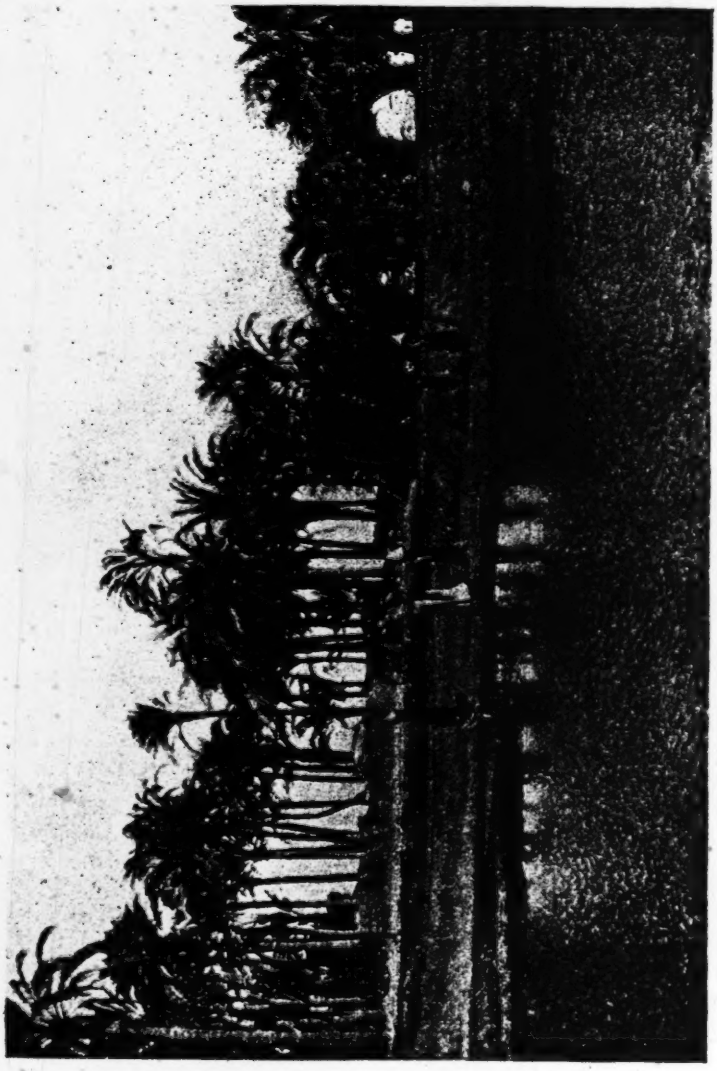

FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

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291 301 554 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my informant, they represent the money given to the bride before her marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 554 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 302 765 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative, but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
776 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
794 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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[854]
[291]
[142]

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[753] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The water is called *moiyet el-malāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
141 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

[463]
[291]
[285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

789
852

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the
[856] feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

F C 302 852 708

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

E [291] [532] [142]
F C [262]
F C [465]
F C [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been 832
married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired.

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is betrothed, pay a large sum of money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

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[143]
[291]

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young unmarried girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, 581
but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the 832
house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed

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common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

E 586

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

F [842]
F [291] [142]
F 887 586

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791 832 [291] 431 152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[142]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[716] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus
[714] frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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COPTS MR 10

been sitting and proceeded to lift the jar from off the woman's stomach. It took a very strong and somewhat lengthy pull to do this, and as it was finally removed there was a resounding pop, like an explosion. It was explained to me that one possible reason for the woman not having conceived was that she had "wind in her stomach." The noise caused by the removal of the jar was this wind coming away, as they supposed, from the stomach through the navel. The performance was repeated two or three times, and on each occasion when the jar was pulled away the noise was very loud, and the two attendant women remarked on how much wind the patient had in her stomach. As I have said, the woman who removed the jar had to exercise her full strength to get it away, and this part of the performance must have caused the patient a good deal of discomfort, if not actual pain, for her stomach was dragged up with the jar in the effort to remove it, the suction, of course, being caused by the vacuum created by placing the jar over the lighted 'candle.' I was sorry to hear, when making inquiries later on, that the operation had failed to produce the desired effect!

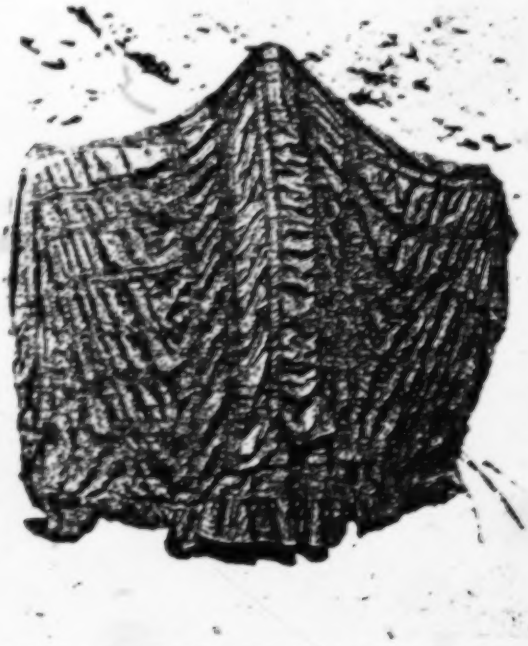

FIG. 47. WOMAN WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN A TŌB

Childless women frequently have recourse to this fertility rite, at any rate in some parts of Egypt. I do not yet know if it is a widely

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FERTILITY RITES

spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion. 842 789

Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. 842 789 291

A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her.

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of 842 789 123

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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [792] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [152]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

[291
769
516]

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
775 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

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asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins. 628 152 689

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities. 527 628 624

[411] [491]

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced. [411]

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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

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323 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large
415 lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage,
323 which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

415 142 291

FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

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thick rim, is now put to sun-bake again, the rope being still left coiled round the lower half. No rope is put round the upper part, but large nicks are impressed in the clay with the thumbnail just below the rim. 323

After the sun-baking is completed the vessels are placed in a kiln to be fired, the cords being previously removed (Fig. 64), though the impress made by the cord remains on the pot even after baking.

FIG. 63. COILING THE FLAT SAUSAGE OF CLAY ROUND THE LUMP OF CLAY ALREADY ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL

A pattern similar to that effected by the rope is employed for the decoration of pots in many countries; but this practice of strengthening and supporting the weakest part of the pot, or the part which receives the greatest pressure, by coiling rope round it probably suggested this decoration in the first instance. When such a practice has died out, possibly owing to greater skill achieved by the potters, the pattern originally made by the impress of the cord upon the pot is imitated for purely decorative purposes.[1] With the Egyptian potters the use of the cord is, as I have already stated, simply to support the thicker and heavier part of the *zīr* while sun-baking, and the impress left on the vessel does not seem to have any æsthetic value attached to it.

[1] I am indebted to Mr Henry Balfour, Curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, for this suggestion.

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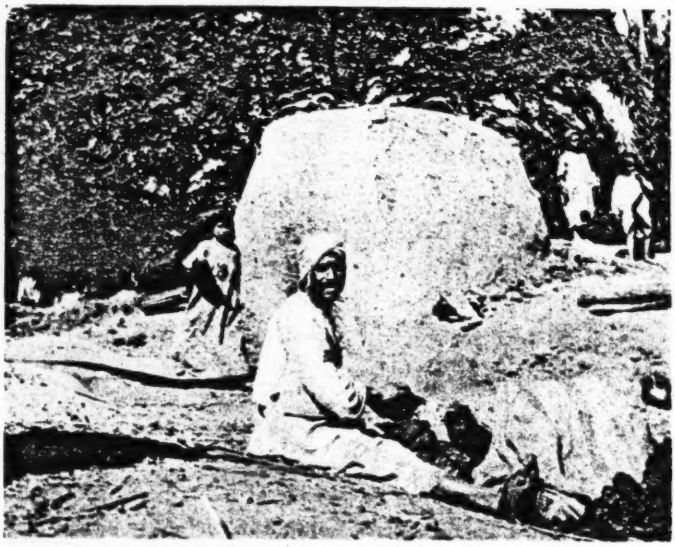
drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323
thick sides.

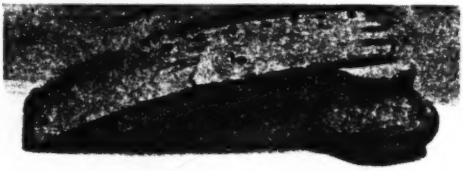
Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the



[291] [140] [516]

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a 303
hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. 563
A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

[137] [091] [142] [815]

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement [413]
made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

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FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

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323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *ṭafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are

[291]

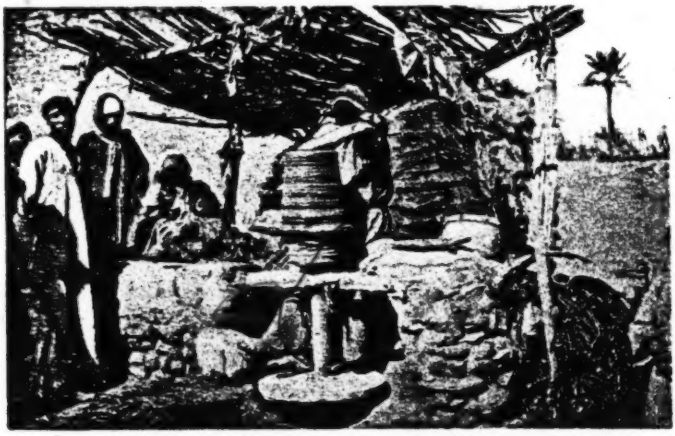

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman [531] artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The [386] paint, which is made of a material called *mughreh* (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freehand, and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work from.

The pots are now ready for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready for them, but they can be put on one side for a short time without any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

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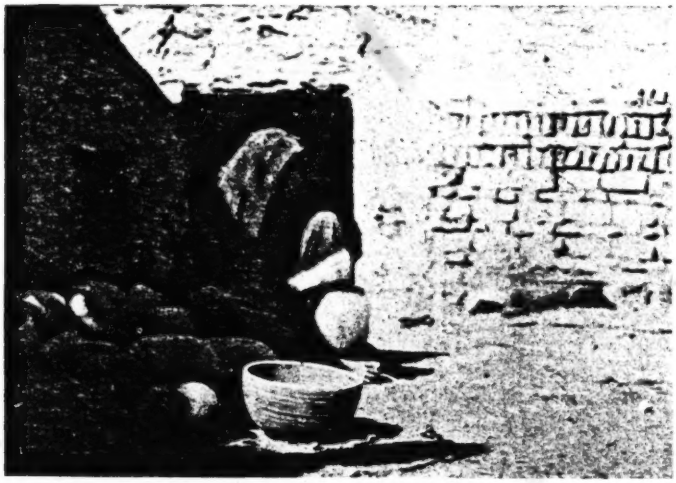

FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

[page 147]

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323 Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which
372 is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531]
[291]
[415]
[516]

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. 285 [34a] [29] [33] [462]

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [480]

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know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not.

The *maḳṭaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

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286 294 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

[283] [291] [142] [516] [857]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

000 Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

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Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462

[286] [299] [291] [14a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

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252 oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning
462 in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done
[392] the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is

[286]
[291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North
252 of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a
[423] great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up
[262] through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

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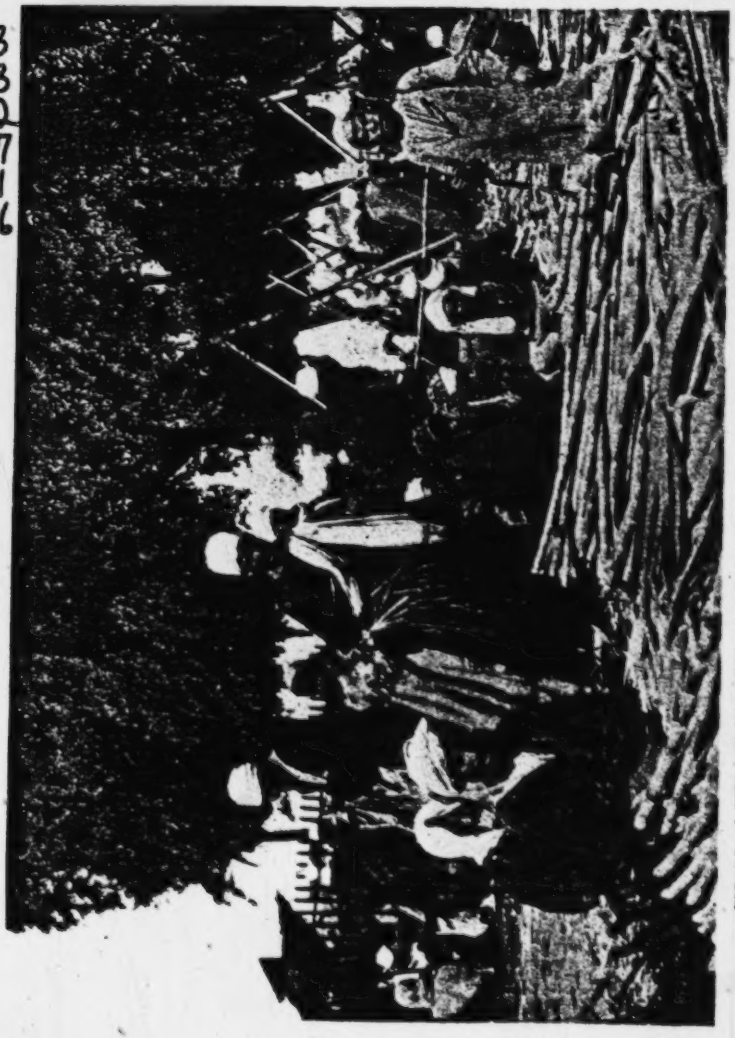

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[492]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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[992]
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FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *ʿafārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *ʿafārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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[912]
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FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

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[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 106. WINNOWING

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FIG. 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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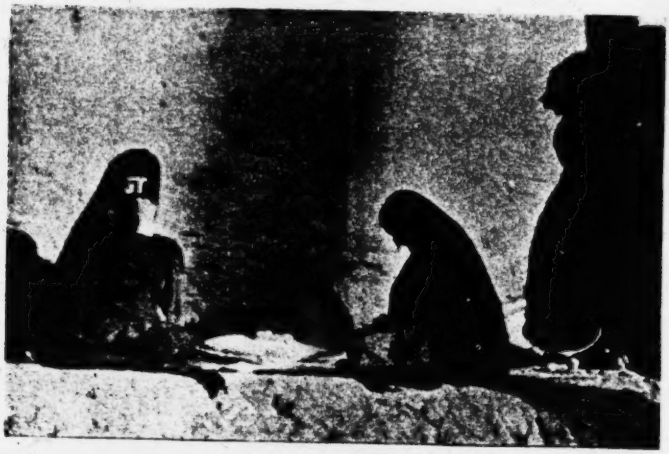
Upper Egypt

down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly 256
be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at

[462]
[291]
[241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS



[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

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FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be

[554]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

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[291]

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

791 796

Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 515 787 796

This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

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FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

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A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291] [342] [352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them.
[152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he cônsiders, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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164 515 854 are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

757 278

756 756 291

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

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to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded.

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

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FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

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[050]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

[page 215]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

757 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of
114 boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no
123 exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232]
[241]

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate
743 medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessed ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 372 782

F [791] [291]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F E 26A 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

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People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

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Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 627 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Co[illegible]in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building. 778 775 762

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

[792] [291]

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass 778 782

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Upper Egypt

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

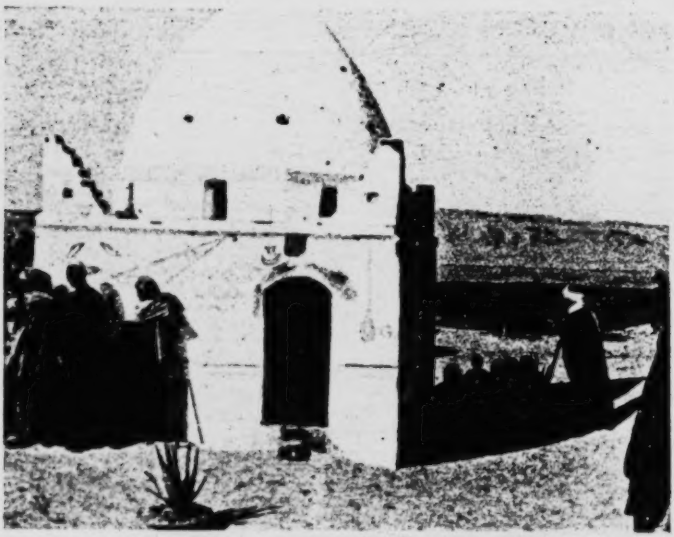

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

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managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The F 346 792

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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*. 796 769

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before 796 789

[29 231 782]

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

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thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

F [515] [823]

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

F 796 789 278

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

F C [297]

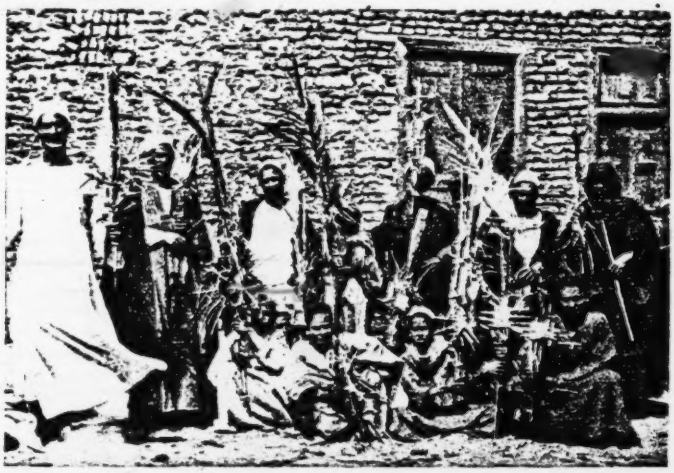


FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

F [576]

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

C 796

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

these tales, which he now relates to the people of his village in the evening. He also tells his tales to his customers, who often wait while he is dying the cloth which they have brought him. Thus some tedious hours of waiting are pleasantly whiled away. 538 115

When he first came to me he was somewhat shy, but after a while, seeing that I was really interested, he would start off without hesitation. Sometimes he would consult the schoolmaster as to what he thought would be most to my taste, giving him a short epitome of two or three stories. Then, when a suitable one was chosen, he would go ahead without further delay. Several stories were recited at a sitting, and occasionally I was writing them down for three or four hours on end. Our servants would often stand near, listening in breathless attention as the plot developed. [291]

FIG. 153. STORY-TELLER, WHO IS ALSO A WATER-CARRIER BY TRADE

The next year I engaged another man, who was a water-carrier by trade (Fig. 153). I was then living in tents near an out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt, and the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) kindly placed his reception-room at my disposal. Wealthier villagers would drop in from time to time and take a seat at a respectful distance from me, while humbler folk stood at the doorway, or squatted on the threshold, all alike listening enthralled, and from time to time uttering ejaculations of appreciation.

I was assured that these tales had never been committed to writing, but had been handed down orally. It may interest my readers to peruse the following, selected from a large number in my possession.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 302

The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle [1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving "late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave." [3]

A [463]

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus [6] tells us that "the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

FA [765]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabīyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

FA 291

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] ii, 37.
[5] See A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. x, p. 200.
[6] ii, 36.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

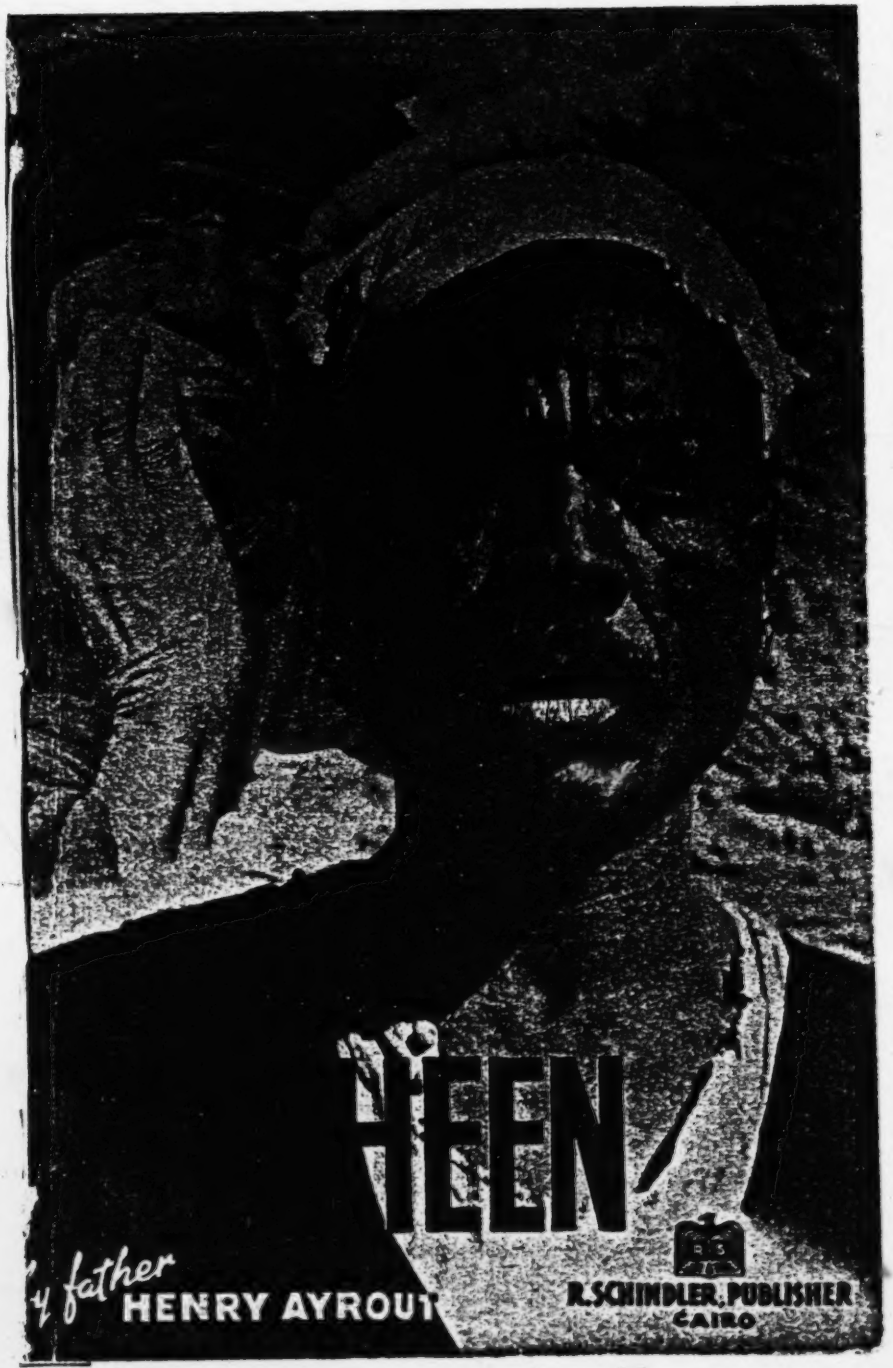
It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

142
291



[Front Cover of Book]

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (")

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [888]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions (30). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a 465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (**).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take 461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (41).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (44). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

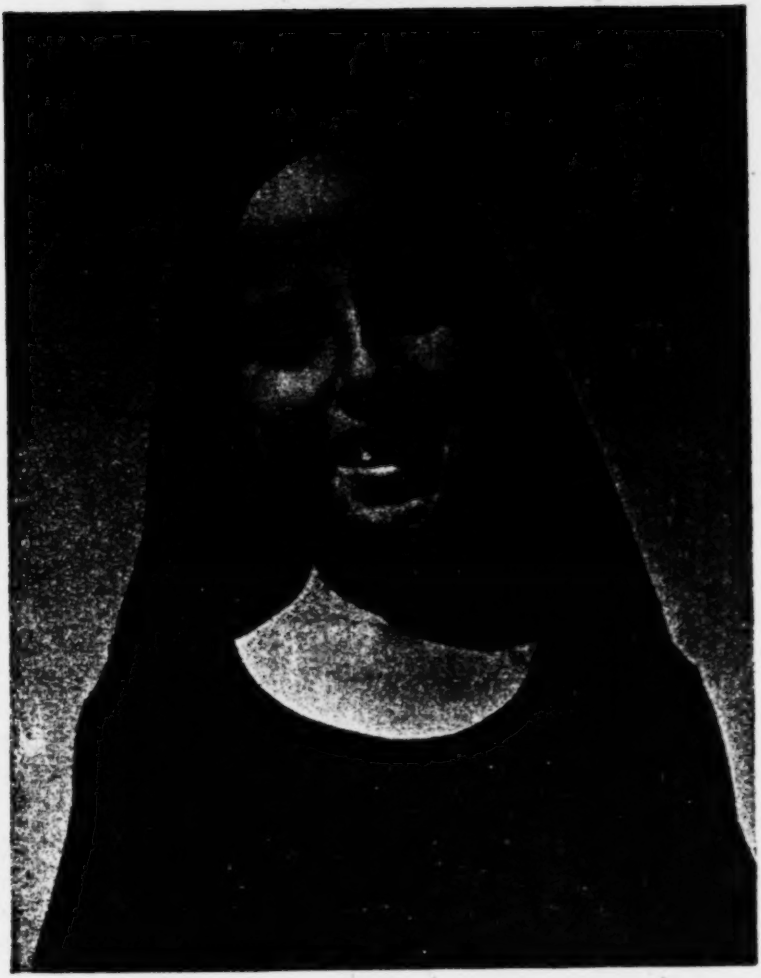
[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

142
291



When they are happy

Page 160 (A)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

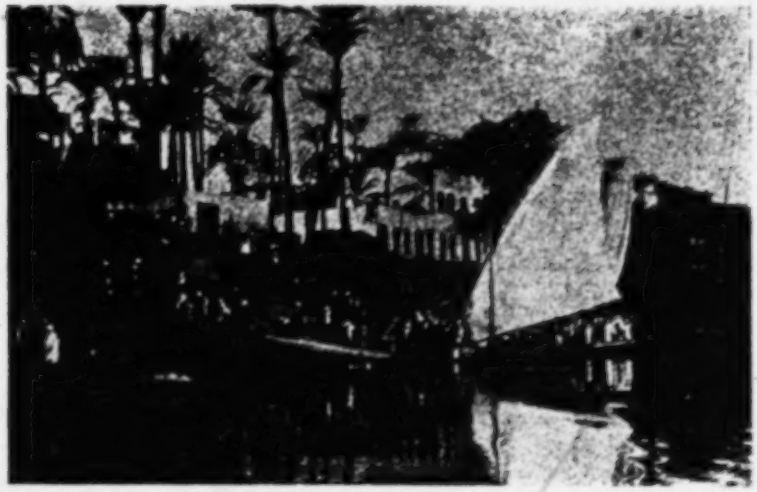
515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



501
361
342
504

A village and ferry on the Nile

291

With them

Page 160(C)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

311
474
291
133

Digging ditches

248
183

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

Page 160 (D)

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

MR13
Fel
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5/6

EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit

Facing p. 35.

164 preceding, it is an infectious parasitic disease, and found in very hideous forms. Through neglect of it, and failure to attend to it at the beginning, it baffles physicians and becomes a danger.

757 The thoughts of the "old wives" are perplexed regarding its "cure." Some of them order anointing with petrol; others order tar and other substances. All are profitless. The famous method is "the cap of pitch" [*ṭaḳīyat-al-zift*] in other words, making the pitch (which is the resin of certain coniferæ) flow upon the head of the patient hot, in the form of a skull-cap[1] and leaving it for weeks, nay months. Then the quack comes one day to pull off the cap—a day of distress for the patient!—since his hair, nay his skin also, sticks to the pitch. So he suffers tortures, and blood flows after the terrible uproar of pulling off the cap. Very often the patient faints on account of the intensity [p. 36] of the pain and the great loss of blood. Then after that there is brought half an oke[2] of common salt crystals and the head of the patient is rubbed with them violently.

Do not ask about the pains of this savage method. After a month has passed the "operation" is repeated. There is no need to witness it to know that the second "operation" is more grievous than the first because the healing of the wound is not complete and the new skin is pulled off a second time, and the pains are doubled. In view of all this, say whether this method is advantageous with its violence and danger! Even if this method were successful sometimes, the success would be due solely to the exclusion of the air by means of the cap prescribed against the parasite, because it ranks as a parasite called aerobic, that is "air-loving."

[291] [1] [*Ḳalansuwa*, or *ḳulansiya*, the name of a tight-fitting cap often worn under a turban. Tr.]
[2] [See above, p. 111.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

516
142
302
291
411
115

Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Mohammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

And the stone was soft for the Prophet, 539
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet, 782
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 3.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 3. [776]

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed daḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardê ḍallil 'alê.
Be-ṭarfê šālo el-'aṣab,
farado we-ṣalla 'alê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me".

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban. [298]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their parents, but are also their dearest treasures. [858]

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫāi, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arnê fūl aḥḍar.
Leḥne 'izāze,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
nitḥaṭṭê fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment. [291]

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, note on l. 11. [262]

5. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but he is fond of having it seen. [301]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

5 *Rāḥet tekubbē-trabha* 539x
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha. 527
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd 821
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyûṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyûṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

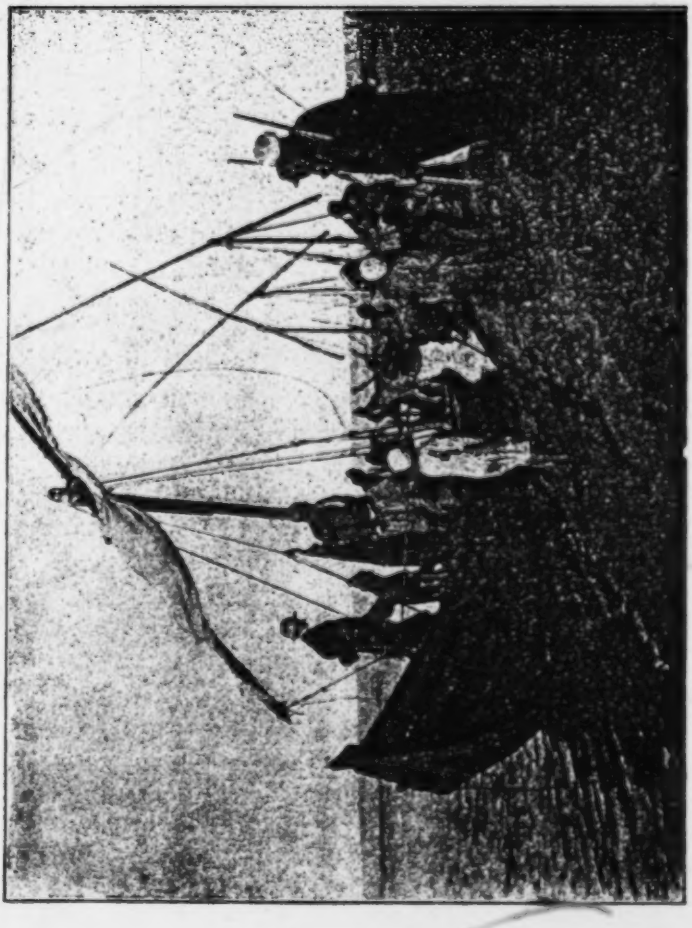
461
291

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Excavating for papyrus.
Ehnaeye in Middle-Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

501
201



Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau

Ferry-boat in Upper-Egypt.
At Hagg Qandil.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

312
406
291

A Shādûf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

57.

Rallying One's Self.

539 583 The payment of a certain sum to the wife, which shall remain her personal property, is one of the indispensable things pertaining to a legal marriage (compare the expression in No. 71, l. 1). The amount of the sum depends, naturally, upon the position and the charms of the bride. The lowest legally allowed sum, is about a dollar and a quarter (five shillings).

A pretty example of a poor peasant poking fun at himself. The dowry which he is able to command is no more than [435] the price of a skull-cap, namely: seven and a half cents (four pence).

Yabu libde, ya fellaḥ, yāne!
wana biddi āḫod Behāne
waddīha nuṣṣ el-ʾabḍīye,
wel-bāʾi aǵib bo ṭaʾīye.

O I with the felt cap, I, the peasant!
I wish to marry Behāne!
And I will give her the half of my wages,
And with the rest I will buy me a skull-cap.

● 291 1. Libde is the thick, closely fitting, felt cap, which the poor peasants wear. Usually it is of coarse, brown felt. Abu-libde, "father (that is: wearer) of the libde" is a frequent term of derision for a peasant.

3. Another said: nuṣṣ ed-damklye.

4. Ṭaʾīye is the white, knitted or crocheted, likewise closely fitting, little cap, which the men wear underneath the felt-cap.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Upper Egypt

415
482
291
312
142

Women Drawing Water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

80.

Caution.

x539
832

Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazūl,
wirḫi ḍalāl šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

1. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

[834]
[184]
[291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The Charmer.

×539
832

93.

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
u-ʿala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
libiset ʿuṣēbe wimradde,
witmaiyilet ʿal-muḥadde.
5 *sabbalit ʿiyūn el-muḥabbe,*
ma laḥeʾtiš alaggam ḥoṣāni.

[302] O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love (thee).
She wore a fillet and a gay-colored bodice,
And leaned upon the cushion.
5 She drooped her alluring eyes, —
Then I had no time curb my steed.

1. We would say: Thy beautifully painted eyes have fettered me.

2. Compare with this strange construction in the Arabic, No. 5, l. 2.

3. The ʿuṣēbe is a little scarf, which is wound about the [291] head like a fillet. The meradde is the gay-colored front of a vest-like garment.

4. She sends him an alluring, languishing glance from her half-closed eyes.

94. 539x 832

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
'ala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
El-bēḍa libiset dabūli
weš-šāṭeḥ wel-'o'd el-lūli.
5 *'ala mir-rāḥ u-gābû-li*
wašṭaḥ-bo nuṣṣ el-layāli.

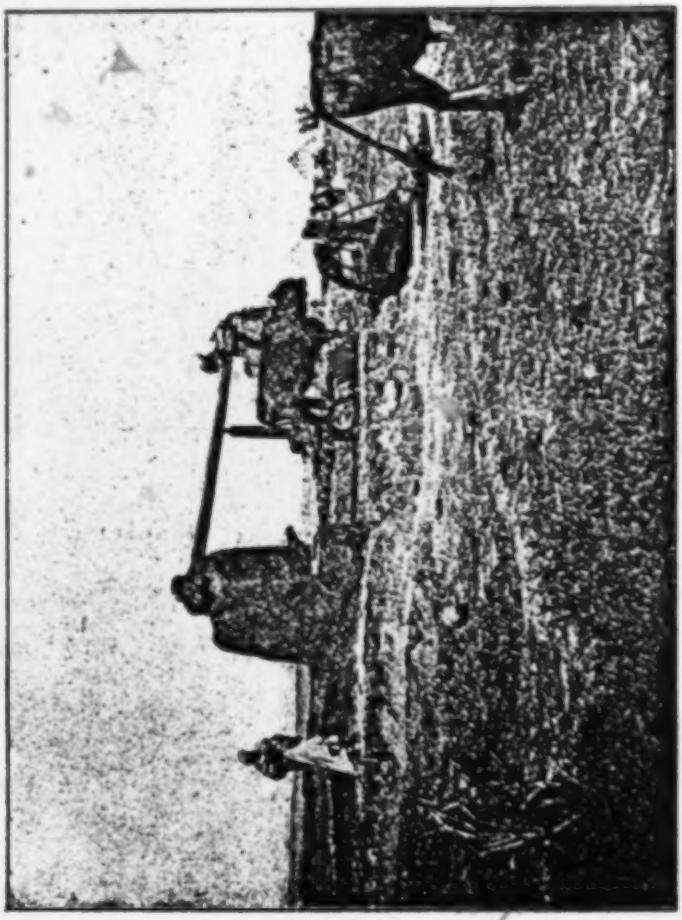
O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love thee.
The white one wore silk,
And the shāṭeḥ and the necklace of pearls. [301]
5 Who will go and bring her to me? —
That I may recline with her at midnight!

1. Compare No. 93, l. 1.

4. Shāṭeḥ is a head-dress of gold or silver coins sewed in a row on the border of a piece of cloth, so that they lie on the forehead from temple to temple. (Almkvist, Kleine Beitraege p. 354.) Other kinds of head-dress however, are known by this name. (Lane II, p. 356.) [291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

231
·40
291



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Sāqye Near the Great Pyramids.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

101.

Near the Goal.

×539

Ḥaiya, yabnê ʿammi,
ḥaiya, ya dalîl!
Win gāni ibnê ʿammi,
lašāwar bi-kummi
5 *wa'ul: yabnê ʿammi,*
faragallâh 'arīb.

Up, cousin,
Up, [my] beloved!
And when my cousin comes to me,
I will signal to him with my sleeve,
5 And say: Dear cousin,
The joy of Allah is near!

1. Regarding "cousin", see Nos. 87; 96.
2. Maḥmûd explained dalîl as ḫaṭîb muḫbir.
4. The sleeves are full and hang down over the hands.
6. The joy which Allah sends, namely: our union.

[291]
[581]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

×539
554
574

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behāim
5 *we-šīl waḥlat iš-šite!*

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
5 And cart off the winter's dung!"

[291] 1. The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).
2. So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.
3. Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

109.

Progress.

539 x

The gallābiye is a cotton, shirt-like garment, reaching to the feet or a little above. It is mostly worn gathered up by means of a belt. It is worn by both men and women. [291]

Ah yāna wez-zemān hannāni,
yabu gallābiye, wez-zemān hannāni.
Ruḥt lil-faṣṣal yefaṣṣalhā-li,
ruḥt lil-ḫaiyaṭ yeḫaiyaṭha-li,
5 *ruḥt labāye yelabbishā-li*
we-ruḥt lil-ʿarīs yeʾallaḥhā-li.

Oh, how good time has been to me,
I, with the gallābiye, time has been good to me!
I went to the cutter to have him cut it for me, [294]
I went to the tailor to have him sew it for me,
5 I went to my father, to have him put it on me,
And I went to my bridegroom, to have him pull it off me. [585]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sweet Medicine.

x539

110.

Yammû tôb ṣāfi we-šbēka welwān
weš-šiffa-l-ḥamra lam tiṛzil kittan
wil-ʿēn es-sōda lam tiḥmil duḫḫān.

Yammû tôb ṣāfi, ya šarak el-hawa,
5 *u-šaʿrik laṣfar yilʿab-bo-l-hawa,*
u-ṣiḥnî nhādik waṣafû-li dawa.

● [291] O thou, with the light outer garment and the hair-net and the gay clothes,
And the red lip, which has not had to spin flax,
And the black eye, which has not had to endure smoke.

O thou with the light outer garment, thou catch-net of love!
5 The wind plays with thy yellow hair,
And the plate of thy breasts has been prescribed as medicine for me.

1. Under the black, transparent, outer garment, the women wear a gay — usually red or yellow — dress of calico or finer material. Maḥmûd wished elwān = "the colors", understood as applying to this garment.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

117.

Light Minded.

×539 *Ummali ē? ummali ē?*
aḫod el-fellaḥ: a'mil-bo ē?
aḫod el-gindi
abu šal hindi.
5 *Hāwa yeranni*
wanarudd 'alē.

Of course, what else? Of course, what else?
If I take the peasant, what shall I do with him?
I will take the soldier
With the Indian shawl.
5 He shall sing
And I shall answer him.

118.

Dost Thou Think of Me?

Yasmar, yabu 'ēn 'asalīye,
garḥē hawāk itmakkan fiye.
Yasmar, yabu-l-libās es-sīni,
ana 'ala bālak wala-nte nāsini.

Thou brown one, with the honey-brown eyes,
The wound of thy love is fast fixed in me.
[291] Thou brown one with the dainty drawers,
Dost thou remember me, or hast thou forgotten me?

[243] 1. Egyptian honey is much darker than ours.
[117] 2. Literally: "Chinese under drawers". Chinese is used here as Indian is in Nos. 56 and 117.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which 854
he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or 164
mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at 515
all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

[292]

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The 165 292 789 854
child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes 859
the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used 852

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayûm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [118] F [76]

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *henna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḥarras*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 163.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *henna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

E 585

and that the procession is accompanied by men carrying lanterns and candles. As they proceed the women utter their *zaghārīt*. The priest addresses the pair, but before he does so he takes a silken thread and passes it over the right shoulder of the bridegroom and under his left arm, where he ties the thread into a knot with a loop. After the address from the priest is over the bridegroom pays him a sum of money, and then the priest undoes the knotted thread. He then takes the two engagement rings which the bride and bridegroom gave each other at their betrothal and ties them together with a silken thread. After putting certain questions to the pair he returns them their rings, and each puts his or her ring on ; the bridegroom does not place the ring on the bride's finger.

E 585 537

After the service is over the priest invites anyone present who may wish to do so to speak. Perhaps one man may get up and deliver an oration, in which, in addition to various other complimentary remarks, he will probably compare the bride to the moon, and the bridegroom to the sun. Others will follow his example, and even women are permitted to speak on such occasions. The bridegroom then either himself thanks his friends for their kindly speeches or asks his father or his brother to do this for him.

E 585 292

Both bride and bridegroom wear new clothes on the occasion of their marriage, and they wear these garments for seven days after the wedding. When this period has elapsed these clothes are put away for several days, and then they can be worn at any time.

E 585 789

When the bride is on her way to the bridegroom's house her unmarried female friends who accompany her thither pinch her on one of her thighs. By doing this they believe that they also will soon get a husband. The bridegroom is pinched in the same way by his unmarried male friends, who hope that this will ensure each of them a bride. I am told that this is a common custom among the *fellāḥīn*.

On the morning after the marriage night the bridegroom when he goes out pulls a branch off a palm-tree, tears off all the leaves, and then cuts off a long length of the thicker end of the mid-rib as a stick. He then splits up one end of it several times, so that these split ends stand out slightly. With this split stick he strikes any of his unmarried male friends whom he happens to meet. Those whom he thus strikes will, it is believed, shortly marry too. This, according to my informant, is a very old custom which was formerly

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

[291 769 516]

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
● 292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical. 769 735 775 292 152

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on 769 292 152

[735]

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE.

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread- 769 735 431

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of E [152] women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward [302] me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on E the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite [123] of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared [515] the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured hand- E [292] kerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined —such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they E would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the [302] women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

This time the sheikh said, "I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 787 755 787 [263] [789]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

[794]
[292]
[708]

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

[171]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
253 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

F A 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

F A 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

F A 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

F A 849

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i. 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 396
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (").

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292 494] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 619 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
582
288
352
288
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

Page 160 (B)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *farbūsh* crowned with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the "operator" (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the "patient" (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *kashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says:

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits! Oh, Spirits!
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains!
Yā sukkān al-buḥūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas!
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands!
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert!
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring!
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys!

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying:

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening! Oh, yellow ones like apricots! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife]; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Antākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

989 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

955 231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

955 162 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, 292 who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

"THE BLUE WATER" AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either "moving" or "smiting," is very common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from "the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless "cures" whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counteragent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]
[2] [See note, p. 54.]
[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

533
534
755
787
[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ...., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

753
776

These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

S.Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

9. 539* 776

A song of Egyptian origin, containing in part the same verses as our own, was communicated to Dalman (Palaestinischer Diwan, p. 141) in Sidon, by a sailor. Of the first verse he remarks: The flag-staff with the crescent, which is mounted over the tomb, is supposed to sway, as a sign that the saint promises to grant the request made to him. [787]

Hizz el-hilāl, ya Seiyid,
yabu bēra' nabawi!
Win 'ēšt ana, ya Seiyid,
lazūrak sanawi.

Shake the crescent, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the Prophet's flag!
And if I live, O Seiyid,
I shall visit thee yearly.

1. The flag of the Prophet is green, as are the turbans [292] and sometimes even the clothes, of his descendants in Egypt (the Sherifs).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

40.

×539 The father hurries home to the festivity.

304 *'Addini, ya-m'addāwi!*
852 *an-arauwaḥ baladi*
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābîš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adāit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands râqide instead of râide.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Another Contrast.

539x
574
554

104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gāni abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
5 *wazemzem-lo-l-fingāl*
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
5 And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114.

*539 832 Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-'afife
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar 'ala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn wahhadu Alla!*

[242] "Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
[301] "I have put on the bracelets, sir,
[304] And the green tatooing is on my hand!
[779] 5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Ta'alâ-li, ya wād, ta'alâ-li,
taḥtē sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazali!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yūḥ!). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

126.

Recognized.

*539 832 A girl wishes to ingratiate herself with a certain well-to-do young man (ll. 1—2). He repels her, saying that she bears the name of her other lover plainly upon her lips.

Massik bil-ḫēr, ya-Mḥammed mela'ini,
rākib kuḥēle u-rāḥ el-kummē sittīni.
Dā'i'a 'ala šiffetak ḥandar
u-'Osmān Bē! 'Ēš' el-banāt ṣandara!
5 *Ya rabb, neggīni.*

"Good evening, Moḥammed, who meetest me
Riding a noble mare, and trailing the sleeve yards long."
"[O be gone!] Tatooed in green on thy lips is
The name Osman Bê! — — How fickle are girls when in love!
5 O Lord, save me [from all danger]!"

2. The last words mean literally: trailing the sleeve sixty (yards) long, a great exaggeration.

3. Literally: "Thou hast green color tatooed and the [304] name etc." Regarding tatooing see No. 64. Girls often have the name of a lover tatooed upon themselves. Compare a song from Endor in Galilee, in Dalman's collection, p. 112. "... the hands a work of the Creator and the blue tatooing over them strewn. On her breast she writes Ḥ and M and D." (These letters stand for Ḥ(a)m(a)d, the name of the lover.)

5. This exclamation has no connection with what precedes, [282] as it would seem from the English. It is one of the innumerable, ejaculatory prayers, which Moslems enjoy repeating.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [298]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *bwza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [943]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
A [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analysis]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[179] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he
then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark
with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and
singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a
Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own
special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the
house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats
are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candel-
[354] abra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivi-
ties. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot,
527 high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
535 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
[292] and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[301] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots;
but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The
dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn
a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as
quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl
are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their
rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms
seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the
mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of
the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful
freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the
reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive
tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet
• [292] cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole
[292] of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[302] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

E [276]
E [293] [297] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

x534 One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimal,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fīdha-š-šimāl.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [604] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [477] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [586] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [594] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the [591] older generation of men (zalat), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such 178 as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by [609] outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [512] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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291
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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *ḳafaṣ*.

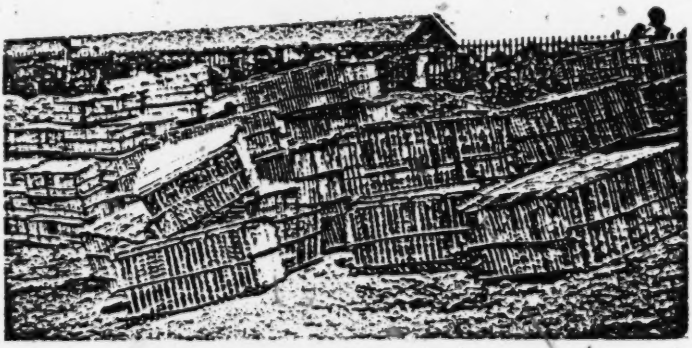
Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*līf*). The *līf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

F 352
F 083
S [285]

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SIWEH (ON RIGHT)

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 394



F [085] [417]

FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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294

confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

283
291
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516
857

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462

[286] [299] [291] [140]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [260]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads. 443 516 462 415 [482]

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be 443

[294] [291] [516]

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, [439] in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using [326] for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot 443 on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front [413] of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, de- [294] scribed in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the [534]

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (11).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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109.

Progress.

539 x

The gallābiye is a cotton, shirt-like garment, reaching [291] to the feet or a little above. It is mostly worn gathered up by means of a belt. It is worn by both men and women.

Ah yāna wez-zemān hannāni,
yabu gallābiye, wez-zemān hannāni.
Ruḥt lil-faṣṣal yefaṣṣalhā-li,
ruḥt lil-ḫaiyāṭ yeḫaiyaṭha-li,
5 *ruḥt labāye yelabbishā-li*
we-ruḥt lil-ʿarīs yeʾallaḥhā-li.

Oh, how good time has been to me,
I, with the gallābiye, time has been good to me!
I went to the cutter to have him cut it for me, [294]
I went to the tailor to have him sew it for me,
5 I went to my father, to have him put it on me,
And I went to my bridegroom, to have him pull [585]
it off me.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children. On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work, or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([30]). Every evening these ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and themselves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering, a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun. This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title. He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious, particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296]
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and [515]
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women [364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zarîba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [378 354 415] [296 515]

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven' while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
[illegible] as for the older children, who usually take their siblings [illegible] when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching [illegible] children as do their older brothers or sisters.

1: Ammar E, L-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

882 [83] [834] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

882 [809] [302] [301]

883 [539] [533] It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[179] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[307] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The
[292] immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole
[292] of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[302] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

•301

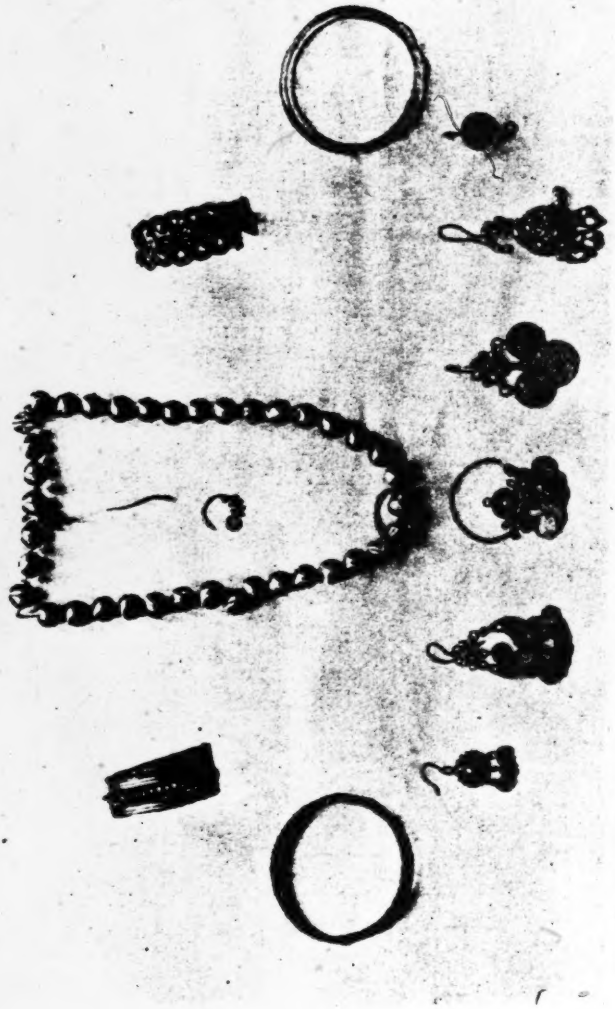

FIG. 18. WOMEN'S ORNAMENTS: NECKLACE, NOSE-RING, METAL BRACELETS, GLASS BANGLES, AND EARRINGS

[page 48]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [882] 301

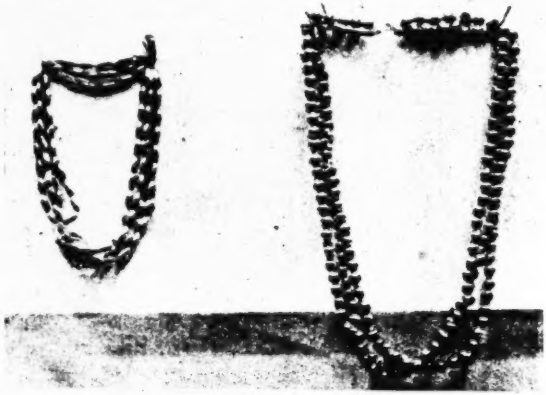

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 789 [987]

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

000 Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla duḳḳ!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!" 304

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black. 304

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree 304 463 531

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 787 755 787 [263] [789]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

789 done so, but that he had dropped it inside his trunk. He went back to the school, searched his trunk carefully, and found the key, as the man had told him he would.

782 789 The *zār* is not necessarily followed by the ceremony called the *ṣulḥeh*; this takes place when a sheikh has troubled a man or woman for some time, and at last becomes appeased. It is a form of peace-making between the sheikh and the person he possesses. If anyone is possessed by more than one sheikh it is not necessary to kill more than one sheep at the *ṣulḥeh*; one victim appeases them all.

[301]

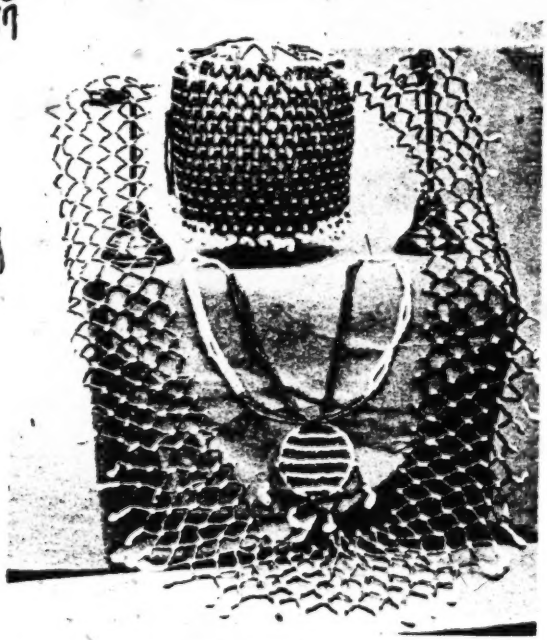

FIG. 120. ORNAMENTS—BELT, PENDANT, AND CAP—SOMETIMES WORN BY A WOMAN AT A ZĀR
The beads are green and white.

This belief, that it is possible to be thus possessed by a sheikh, is a very baneful one. The women who suppose themselves to be thus affected become exceedingly hysterical, and their husbands, for fear of the consequences, are put to great expense. The officials are quite rightly trying to put an end to the holding of the *zār*, but to suppress this ceremony [654] completely will be difficult, as the beliefs associated with it are so deeply rooted in the peasants' minds.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (41).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their parents, but are also their dearest treasures. [858]

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫāi, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arnê fūl aḥḍar.
Leḥne 'izāze,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
niṭḥaṭṭê fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment. [291]

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, note on l. 11. [262]

3. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but he is fond of having it seen. [301]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

40.

×539 304 852 The father hurries home to the festivity.

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-sālāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābîš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adūit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands rāqide instead of rāide.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521 In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
'Ašara min abu ṭa'a
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[177] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbāk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

79.

A Cool Reception.

539x
832

Ya ḥali 'al-bedawiye.
u-la'etni fid-darb eḍ-ḍaiya'.
wel-ḥatim fi-ṣbaḥha yezaiya'.
Ḥallet el-'azib mitnaiya'.
5 *Min ginno ḥarra' eṭ-ṭa'iye.*

O, in what a state am I, because of the Beduin girl!
She met me in the narrow path,
And the ring on her finger sparkled. [301]
She left the lad standing, so that he flew into a rage. [152]
5 In wrath he threw his cap into the fire.

1. El-bedawiye (the Beduin girl) is a frequent subject of the songs of the peasant lads.
4. The sudden change from the first to the third person, is not a rare occurrence in such songs.
5. Respecting this cap compare No. 57, note on l. 4.

[P.84 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 563 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are [576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir mālya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šāwirtê ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintê šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] [312] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

83.

The Language of the Wise.

Aššaret bi-ʿīnêha, fihimt suālîhe; 539*
we-kull el-labîbin bil-ašāre yifhamu. 832 [201]

She made signs with her eyes and I understood
her question;
All wise people understand by signs.

84.

Rose, Look Out!

A young peasant is at work in his field, near a house, in which lives a girl, to whom he would make advances.

Ya warde ṭilli
min ṛēṭ el-fellāḥ!
Ṭallet-li min fō'
bil-ḥala' weṭ-ṭō',
5 *lamma ṛamāni eš-šō'.*
Fi-ʿarḍik ṭilli.

O Rose look out
Upon the peasant's field!
Then she looked down from above,
With earrings and neck-ring (adorned), [301]
Till longing seized me.
"Have pity, look out!"

---

94. 539x 832

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
'ala-l-ḥabaib u-ramāni.
El-bēḍa libiset dabūli
weš-šaṭeḥ wel-'o'd el-lūli.
5 *'ala mir-rāḥ u-gābú-li*
wašṭaḥ-bo nuṣṣ el-layāli.

O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love thee.
The white one wore silk,
And the shāṭeḥ and the necklace of pearls. [301]
5 Who will go and bring her to me? —
That I may recline with her at midnight!

1. Compare No. 93, l. 1.

4. Shāṭeḥ is a head-dress of gold or silver coins sewed in a row on the border of a piece of cloth, so that they lie on the forehead from temple to temple. (Almkvist, Kleine Beitraege p. 354.) Other kinds of head-dress however, are known by this name. (Lane II, p. 356.) [291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
●[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

[582] [605] 1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnê 'ammi = "cousin" (masc.) and bintê 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 6.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

[461] [857] [681] 9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

114.

×539 832 Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-'atīfe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar 'ala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn waḥḥadu Alla!*

[292] "Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
[301] "I have put on the bracelets, sir,
[304] And the green tatooing is on my hand!
[779] 5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Ta'alâ-li, ya wād, ta'alâ-li,
taḥtĕ sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yûḥ!). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

116.

Christian and Moslem.

A Mohammedan woman has thrown herself away on a Coptic goldsmith. The word nuṣrāni, Christian, always has an odious sound to the Moslem; for this reason the woman thinks she has claim to valuable gifts from her lover.

Ramāni-l-ṛarām, ramāni
taḥtě šibbāk en-nuṣrāni.
Ma 'ultě-lak, ya-m'allim Mūse?
Du" lil-kirdān 'arūse!
5 *Muslime we-'āši'et nuṣrāni!*

Love has smitten me, smitten me
Under the Christian's window.
Did I not tell thee, Master Mūsa?
"Fasten a pendant to my necklace!"
5 I, a Moslem, in love with a Christian!

3. Have I not had to ask you once before for the ornament? Me'allim, master, literally: teacher, is a title given to all Copts, with the exception of the poorest classes.

4. 'arūse is an ornament, which hangs zē nīšān = like an order, on the necklace.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Siwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven' while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wi ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [852]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their siblings outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

882 83 [834] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

882 [304] [302] [301]

883 539 533 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

585 Behind this small gathering of men and a great crowd of children, followed the female procession crying out shrills and singing.

After the evening prayer the bridegroom offered a meal to those who [431] were in the procession, as well as others who were invited, after which contributions from men began to be received in the 'haircutting' ceremony. The details of announcement of contributions are exactly the same as those described earlier for the circumcision ceremony.[2] While the bridegroom or 'The Prince', as he is usually called on such an occasion, was [302] having his hair cut, the circle of 'the boys of romance'[3] was in full swing outside the house; other adolescent boys were engaged in mock fighting with their staves.

As the contribution ceremony ended, the crowd of boys stopped their organized playing and singing and showed signs of excitement and anticipation for the next event, when the bridegroom in his best clothes, a dagger tied to his waist and a stick in hand, had to go to meet the bride. Immediately the bridegroom came out of the house, another procession was organized. The procession was led by a strong youth taking a camel-load of wheat, corn, lentils and beans which was to be the bridegroom's provisions for three months. The bridegroom himself was amidst a group of his friends, who were reciting the traditional song of: 'O God, Praise our Prophet; our hearts love him because he will save us from Hell.' At the very rear came the procession of women, and the whole procession moved towards the bride's house.

As the singing and beating of the drums were heard by the bride's people, they came out with her, face and body covered, and in the care of her mother and the midwife, with another girl walking beside them carrying candles and corn on a tray on her head. Other women and girls were following in a state of great excitement. When the two processions met, the midwife took the bride to the bridegroom. On her face being uncovered to see him, he was prepared to sprinkle her face with some milk which he had in his mouth and would expel with force.[1] At this moment the excitement reached its peak as the boys around the bridegroom sang at the top of their voices, 'The roses are blossoming. She is rightfully thine, she is rightfully thine.'[2]

The tension between the bridegroom's maternal and paternal relations [518] reached its highest a short time later when the traditional mock fight began over the loaded camel. This fight usually takes place just in front of the bride's house, where some boys belonging to the bridegroom's family try to take the camel back to where it came from, while other boys from the bride's family try to prevent them from doing so and lead the camel to

[1] It is by no means the first time the bride and bridegroom saw each other, which might be inferred from such a ritual.

[2] It is one of the signs of a 'good man' not to show any signs of embarrassment, and to be able to aim the milk right at the bride's face, otherwise he would be chaffed about it. [518] On this occasion, although the bridegroom did this job properly, he was not spared some criticism especially from those who were in favour of a marriage with his paternal cousin.

2 [See Category 116, P. 117 -- analyst]
3 [See Category 116, P. 186 -- analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut [155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

● 302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[412]

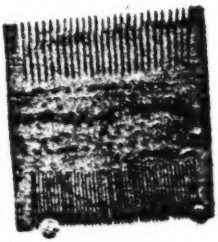

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 832 302 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 589 302 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [826]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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302 form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

[1165] After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

[291]

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

[593] [832]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat 302
painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony [478]
(Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, [415]
called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure [755]
for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent 784
nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use 853
scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule 302
the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom 753
I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit 291
that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses 515
which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women [154]
walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach 291
almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a [462]
long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh 291
Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several 301
gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 554

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
307 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably
291 adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of rings. On one of the baskets is placed a large winnowing sieve, 852 in which the child sleeps all night. When the midwife comes on the following morning, and both mother and child have been washed, some of the grains from one of the baskets are put in the sieve, the baby also being placed in it. The midwife then tosses and shakes the baby in the sieve, its mother meanwhile banging the edge of the metal basin with a tin mug. The striking of the basin by the mother is not, I believe, always done, but on one occasion when I was present at this ceremony the mother acted in this way. The tossing and shaking of the child in the sieve is repeated several times, after which the grains are returned to the basket. The midwife now takes the child in her arms, and covers it with a cloth of white cotton on which are placed some of the grains from one of the baskets. Having first carried the child into all the rooms on the ground floor, she then goes outside the house, sprinkling some of the grains wherever she walks, and repeating "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet") over and over again during the whole of her perambulation.

[789]

FIG. 37. UMBILICAL CORD IN COTTON WRAPPING, AND OTHER CHARMS SUSPENDED FROM IT

Left to right: twisted iron wire, string of seven grains of beans, and bag containing samples of the seven ingredients of one of the baskets.

The child is now taken back into the mother's room, and the midwife blackens its eyes with *koḥl*, a bottle of which she has brought with her. She dips a feather into the *koḥl*, and, having opened the child's eyes, passes the feather across each of them in turn. After thus painting the eyes she fastens round the child's neck the cotton case containing a piece of the umbilical cord, to which are 852 302 789

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
141 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

[463]
[291]
[285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

789
852

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *kohl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F C 553 852

forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

F C [1008]

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

F C [1465]

In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

F C 307 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

F C 302 852 778

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

E [291] [532] [142]
F C [262]
F C [465]
F C [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

302 852 778 I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

F C 302 852 778 As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

F C [431]

F C [535] [152]

000 I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [778] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. C 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *henna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarras*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through

E [152] [302] this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently

E [123] [515] the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in

E [292] the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they

E [302] would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 304

in vogue in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (2160–1788 B.C.) is definitely proved by a blue faience figure of a girl dating from the Eleventh to Thirteenth Dynasty and by the mummies of two girls dating from the Eleventh Dynasty. Both the mummies and the faience figure have tattoo marks on the body and the limbs.[1]

F A 302

Either locks of false hair fastened on, or whole wigs, were commonly used by the ancient Egyptian women.[2] The long plaits of hair worn by the modern peasant women (p. 56) can certainly be matched in ancient times;[3] Professor Petrie found a long plait of hair and a false fringe even in a First-Dynasty royal tomb at Abydos.[4] We have no indication, however, that the plaits served the same utilitarian purposes that they often serve nowadays (see p. 56)! It is to be observed that the wooden combs used to-day in dressing the hair (p. 56, Fig. 26) are very like the ancient ones (Fig. 156).

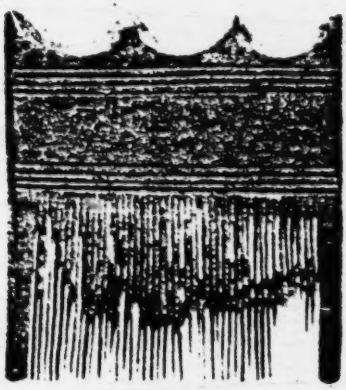

FIG. 156. ANCIENT COMB
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Pl. 19, 1.

The painting of the eyes with *kohl* was practised as much in ancient times as it is at the present day (p. 59), and by both men and women. In a satirical papyrus dating from the later New Kingdom, and now preserved in the Turin Museum, there is a caricature of a woman looking into a hand-mirror and 'making up.'[5] The constant references to perfumes in the ancient religious and literary texts[6] make it evident that the modern love of scent (p. 59) is not a recently acquired taste.

A [538]

A 113

[1] H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1922–1923," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1923, pp. 22, 26, 28.
[2] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 248; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies* (London, 1924), p. 117, Fig. 33.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
[4] W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, Part I (London, 1902), Pl. IV, Fig. 7.
[5] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 258.
[6] *E.g.* A. Erman, *op cit.*, pp. 28, 33, 61, 133, 209, 244, 247, 249, 252.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F A 302 A [463]

The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle [1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving "late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave." [3]

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus [6] tells us that "the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

F A [765]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabīyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

F A 291 A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] ii, 37.
[5] See A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 200.
[6] ii, 36.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

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The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

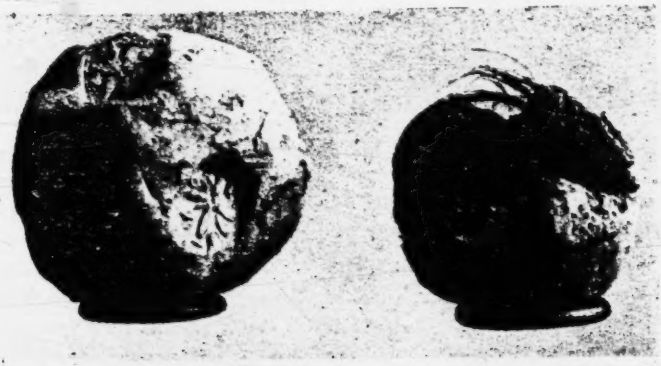

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

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Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

A
[113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. ([34])

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [888]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it ([37]). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* ([38]) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([30]). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751] at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the '*omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [831]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (").

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F 292 505 C F 152 302 987

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F 782 C F 265 443 764

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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857]

and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249
136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

516
142
302
291
411
115

Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

53.

To Vain Beauties.

x539
302

Why wish to touch up natural beauty by artificial means?

El-ʿēn sōda min Alla,
wil-koḥl lāḫir lē?
wil-ḫadd aḥmar min Alla,
wil-ḥosn-Yūsif lē?

The eye is black from Allah,
Wherefore then the eye-paint?
And the cheek is red from Allah,
Wherefore then Joseph's-beauty"?

2. Their black, shining eyes are the pride of the Egyptian women. Eye-paint (koḥl) is the well-known, black, coloring matter, which is used to day, as in ancient Egypt, to blacken the edges of the eyelids. The peasant-women often disagreeably overdo it.

4. "Joseph's-beauty" is the name of a red cosmetic (compare Klunzinger p. 184). Joseph is often mentioned as an ideal of beauty.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The Charmer.

×539
832

93.

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
u-ʿala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
libiset ʿuṣēbe wimradde,
witmaiyilet ʿal-muḥadde.
5 *sabbalit ʿiyūn el-muḥabbe,*
ma laḥeʾtiš alaggam ḥoṣāni.

● [302] O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love (thee).
She wore a fillet and a gay-colored bodice,
And leaned upon the cushion.
5 She drooped her alluring eyes, —
Then I had no time to curb my steed.

1. We would say: Thy beautifully painted eyes have fettered me.

2. Compare with this strange construction in the Arabic, No. 5, l. 2.

[291] 3. The ʿuṣēbe is a little scarf, which is wound about the head like a fillet. The meradde is the gay-colored front of a vest-like garment.

4. She sends him an alluring, languishing glance from her half-closed eyes.

106.

"Love . . . is not Provoked."

539x
152

Jealous women attempt to blacken a lover in the eyes of his sweetheart.

En-nās ʾālû-li: ḥabībik kwoiyis —
ʾultē: ai, ma-lo?
ʾālu-mḥanni yemīno —
ʾultē: wi-šmālo!
5 *ʾālu: beyiʾlaʿ u-yilbis —*
ʾultē: mim-malo!
ʾālu: beyākul melabbis —
ʾultē: hanīyâ-lo!
ʾālu: da fī er-radīye —
10 *ʾultē: mīn ṭalo?*
Rāḥu, ya ʿawāzil,
u-baṭṭalu di-l-ʾōl!
illa maʿâ laḥs,
yirmi kullē min ṭalo!

People said to me: Thy lover is handsome —
I said: Yes, what is the matter with him?
They said: He colors his right hand with henna — [302]
I said: His left also!
5 They said: He makes many changes in his dress —

×539
152

I said: With his own money!
They said: He eats sweets —
I said: May they agree with him!
They said: He is ill-natured —
10 I said: Who has laid hold of him?
Be gone, you jealous creatures,
And cease your talk!
Unless you do, you will learn that his glance
Vanquishes everyone who lays hold of him!

[302]
[157]

3. He is an effeminate fop! The dyeing of certain portions of the hands and feet, with the leaves of the henna shrub (Lawsonia inermis), customary among the women and children, is considered, when practiced by men, a sign of effeminacy.

5. He is a dandy.

7. He has a sweet-tooth.

10. That is to say: Who provoked him? He must have had cause for being unpleasant. Maḥmûd interpreted this line as: "min fîkum misik fî" that is to say, "Which of you has laid hold of him."

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[179 generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533 by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candel-
[354] abra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292 embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a [illegible]y musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckr[illegible] voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet
[292] cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole
[292] of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[302] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of 582
gossip and warning against such mixture.

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child 853
does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth.

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. 856
The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting.

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of 862
premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food.

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed [821]
to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, [842]
and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circum- [304]
cision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to [821]
infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive.

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth 854
and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, he girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their children outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. 269 They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while [805] those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is 852 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three 304 and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the [264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands. 852 304

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment. [300] [534] [431] [749]

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent. [292] [152] [842]

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice. [262]

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree 852

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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882 men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find
83 difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please
[834] her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage
882 by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguish-
304 able from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a
[302] special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her
[301] ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

883 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in
539 singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance
533 boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

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765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

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PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

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304 under which he squats, so that his clients can choose whatever
463 pattern or patterns they prefer. Some are very elaborate, and
531 must involve considerable suffering on the part of the person who is tattooed with them. Many of the patterns are conventional designs, and I am assured that they have no special meaning, but are chosen according to individual taste and fancy. One pattern is called *esh-shagareh* (the tree), and is the one usually chosen by both men and women to decorate the back of the right hand. So far as I have observed, this pattern when used by women differs slightly from that used by men. The drawing given here (Fig. 21) I made from the hand of a woman; the marks were tattooed on her hand when she was a young girl.

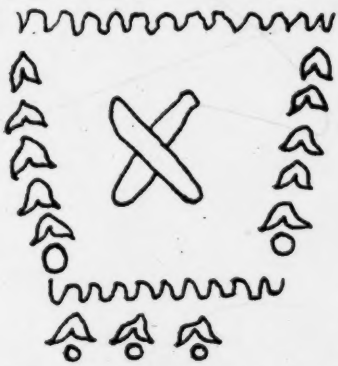

FIG. 21. TATTOO MARKS ON THE BACK OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT HAND AND ACROSS THE BACK OF THE WRIST

FIG. 22. TATTOO MARK FROM EDGE OF LOWER LIP TO BASE OF CHIN

304 The women are usually
531 tattooed from the edge of the lower lip down to the base of the chin. The pattern shown in Fig. 22, copied by me from the same woman, is also called *esh-shagareh*. The tattoo on the back of the hand and wrist, as well as on the fingers and thumb, is said to make them strong.

FIG. 23. TATTOO MARKS ON WOMAN'S FINGERS TO MAKE THEM STRONG

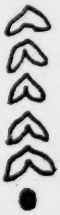

FIG. 24. TATTOO MARKS ON THUMB BELOW THE SECOND JOINT TO MAKE THE THUMB STRONG

304 A boy is often tattooed with a single dot on his chin and another near his right nostril; also most boys have three dots, thus ⁝, tattooed on one arm, just above the wrist. Boys are tattooed in

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [596] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *'afrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered.

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out.

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt,

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut
[155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[412]

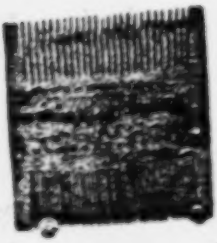

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as
832 well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one
302 of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals
589 the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it
302 is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [178] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. C 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

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drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]

Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths, looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat, bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!" C 776

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it. F

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F 776 784 F [803] F [226] [227] F

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared. C [464] E [241] C [788]

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *karīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly. E 776 E [304] C F [794]

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

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F A 304

in vogue in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom (2160–1788 B.C.) is definitely proved by a blue faience figure of a girl dating from the Eleventh to Thirteenth Dynasty and by the mummies of two girls dating from the Eleventh Dynasty. Both the mummies and the faience figure have tattoo marks on the body and the limbs.[1]

F A 302

Either locks of false hair fastened on, or whole wigs, were commonly used by the ancient Egyptian women.[2] The long plaits of hair worn by the modern peasant women (p. 56) can certainly be matched in ancient times;[3] Professor Petrie found a long plait of hair and a false fringe even in a First-Dynasty royal tomb at Abydos.[4] We have no indication, however, that the plaits served the same utilitarian purposes that they often serve nowadays (see p. 56)! It is to be observed that the wooden combs used to-day in dressing the hair (p. 56, Fig. 26) are very like the ancient ones (Fig. 156).

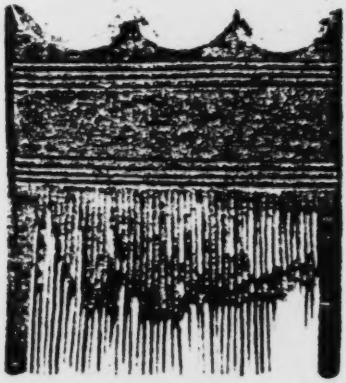

FIG. 156. ANCIENT COMB
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Pl. 19, 1.

The painting of the eyes with *kohl* was practised as much in ancient times as it is at the present day (p. 59), and by both men and women. In a satirical papyrus dating from the later New Kingdom, and now preserved in the Turin Museum, there is a caricature of a woman looking into a hand-mirror and 'making up.'[5] The constant references to perfumes in the ancient religious and literary texts[6] make it evident that the modern love of scent (p. 59) is not a recently acquired taste.

A [538]

A 113

[1] H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1922–1923," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1923, pp. 22, 26, 28.
[2] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 248; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies* (London, 1924), p. 117, Fig. 33.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
[4] W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, Part I (London, 1902), Pl. IV, Fig. 7.
[5] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 258.
[6] *E.g.* A. Erman, *op cit.*, pp. 28, 33, 61, 133, 209, 244, 247, 249, 252.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

F A 533 537 775

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

F A C 852 302

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

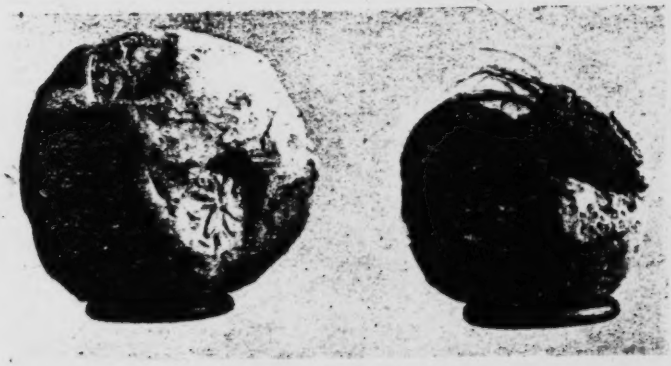

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

F A 304

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

A [113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 304

priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳ-ḳāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kꜣ*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḥ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmehet, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

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[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Ehevertrage aus vorsaïtische Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

A [113]

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. ([24])

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'ídi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [388]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [391]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found 304] lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it (**). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* (**) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([30]). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognizable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often caled *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 426] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751] at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the '*omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754 might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [796] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [789] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. *Tr.*]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

773 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be
776 immune.

[751] The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise
[843] she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḥrās*, lives for ever.

If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born,
[304] when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of
751 the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes
[761] that her *ḳarīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 A *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed
753 the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and expressed
[755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother
753 knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are
755 resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there
778 is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself
[787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 7/1 .

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

7/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [788] [103] [131]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbîye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

Dināre 'ālet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarrag 'al-bagūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

40. 41.

539x 852 304

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

40.

×539 The father hurries home to the festivity.
● 304
852

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Baecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbtsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābiš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adūit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands rāqide instead of rāide.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

64.

Dreams of the Future.

539x
304●
858

For explanation of the manner of address compare with the preceding song. Here prosperity is wished the little one, and a fine tatooing — the pride of a pretty girl — is promised her. Girls are usually tatooed at the age of five or six.

In the country almost all the women are tatooed; most frequently on the front part of the chin and on the lip, but also on the forehead, breast, backs of the hands and on the feet. The designs are pricked in with needles and blue or green coloring matter rubbed in. Compare Nos. 114 and 126.

Alla yę'ēnik, ya uzēz el-Yaman!
win 'amet el-wizze we-'amet sa'dīha,
ladu" lil-wizze 'ala ka'bīha.

Allah help thee, gosling of Yemen!
And when the goose has grown up and her fortune has grown too,
Then I will tatoo the goose upon her wrists and ankles.

1. Yemen = Arabia Felix, Araby the Blest.

2. Upon Maḥmūd's explanation of 'amet sa'dīha I was strongly reminded of: "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men". Added to this were riches of course.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114.

×539 832 Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-ʾaṭīfe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar ʿala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn waḥḥadu Alla!*

[292] "Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
[301] "I have put on the bracelets, sir,
[304] And the green tatooing is on my hand!
[779] 5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Taʿālâ-li, ya wad, taʿālâ-li,
taḥtĕ sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yūḥ!). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

126.

Recognized.

A girl wishes to ingratiate herself with a certain well-to-do young man (ll. 1—2). He repels her, saying that she bears the name of her other lover plainly upon her lips.

Massīk bil-ḫēr, ya-Mḥammed melā'ini,
rākib kuḥēle u-rāḥ el-kummē sittīnī.
Dā'i'a 'ala šiffetak ḥandar
u-'Osmān Bē! 'Iš' el-banāt ṛandara!
5 *Ya rabb, neggīni.*

"Good evening, Mohammed, who meetest me
Riding a noble mare, and trailing the sleeve yards long."
"[O be gone!] Tatooed in green on thy lips is
The name Osman Bê! — — How fickle are girls when in love!
5 O Lord, save me [from all danger]!"

2. The last words mean literally: trailing the sleeve sixty (yards) long, a great exaggeration.

3. Literally: "Thou hast green color tatooed and the name etc." Regarding tatooing see No. 64. Girls often have the name of a lover tatooed upon themselves. Compare a song from Endor in Galilee, in Dalman's collection, p. 112. "... the hands a work of the Creator and the blue tatooing over them strewn. On her breast she writes Ḥ and M and D." (These letters stand for Ḥ(a)m(a)d, the name of the lover.)

5. This exclamation has no connection with what precedes, as it would seem from the English. It is one of the innumerable, ejaculatory prayers, which Moslems enjoy repeating.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
●304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

small landholders. Three decades ago, the head of one family owned about thirty acres, but after his death the land was divided into smaller plots between his inheritors. At present, apart from two outside landowners who possess about sixty acres in the village, and ten other villagers who each own more than five feddans, all the rest own less than five feddans. If the total arable land, estimated at 1350 acres, were distributed among the total population of 4450 people approximately, the *per capita* share would be little less than third of an acre (seven kirats) or 0·58 crop area *per capita*, which is slightly higher than the crop area *per capita* for the whole country, i.e. 0·46.[1] Moreover, the soil of the cultivable land in the village represents the average soil in the country, judging by its taxable power, which ranges from eighty to a hundred piastres.

At this juncture, it is relevant to mention that according to the Koranic law, at the death of man or woman, his or her property is shared by all the children of the deceased. We cannot go into the various details of the intricate Moslem law of inheritance, but shall refer to some of its significant principles. A female gets a share half that of the male. The inheritance should always be awarded to the 'asaba, the patrilineal line, however distant its members may be (apart from the wife, if she lives after her husband). The law recognizes the equivalence of siblings of the same sex, and it gives no privileges to primogeniture.

During the father's life, his children, whatever their age or status, have no legal right to own any of his property.[2] Whether to divide the land each attending to his share independently, or to keep it intact and farm it co-operatively, depends on the relationship between the heirs.[3] Many factors are involved, such as the existence of half-siblings (brothers or sisters by the father only), where the possibility of division is very great, on the relations of wives and in-laws, on the father's treatment of his children while alive, and so forth. If the land as the symbol of family unity is tilled co-operatively, the married sisters then get their land produce

[1] The 'crop area' unit is used instead of the acre because of the existence of the two systems of irrigation in various parts of the country, and hence the crop area gives a more accurate estimate of the cultivable land. For the whole country it is calculated that the land yields an average of a crop and a half per acre. For the whole country the population is 19,090,000, the cultivated area per acres, 5,585,300, and crop area 8,815,900 (Census 1947).

[2] See S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*, London, 1931.

[3] The fear of division and perhaps the forgetting of one's name in the family has led some of the landowners to consecrate land, for all the members of his family of the patrilineal descent, which could not be owned separately, and should pass, as left, intact to the second generation and the third and so on. This type of land is called 'Wakf Ahli—family endowment', to differentiate it from Wakf Khairi—charitable endowment, consecrated for religious purposes and looked after by the Ministry of Charitable Endowments. The abuses in running these estates led the new regime that followed the abdication of ex-King Farouk to pass a law dissolving the charitable endowments (September 1952). According to this law these estates are to be distributed among the legal heirs as specified by the Islamic law of inheritance.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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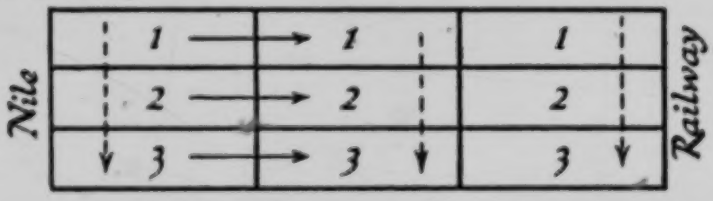
428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are [651] fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than [578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' [311] division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging [425] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawîr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*bardri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the 241
improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield 242
per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged 311
only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are 134
in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable 161
factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant 163
increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of 162
living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, 511
the problem of over-population will become acute. The pal- 185
liatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken: on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (").
This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel- [721
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([16]).

164 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 311 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village ; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkuz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311]
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require-
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a 241]
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoosa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Digging ditches

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Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

Page 160 (D)

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellahs*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution. [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being less embarrassed, less inquisitive, [312] and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

On the whole for him this is a [868] stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [481]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [341]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [331]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:

He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:

If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:

Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:

Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:

In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:

The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:

One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:

The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:

The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:

Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:

One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:

Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.

[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [394] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

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sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

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FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHĀDŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *felláḥin*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

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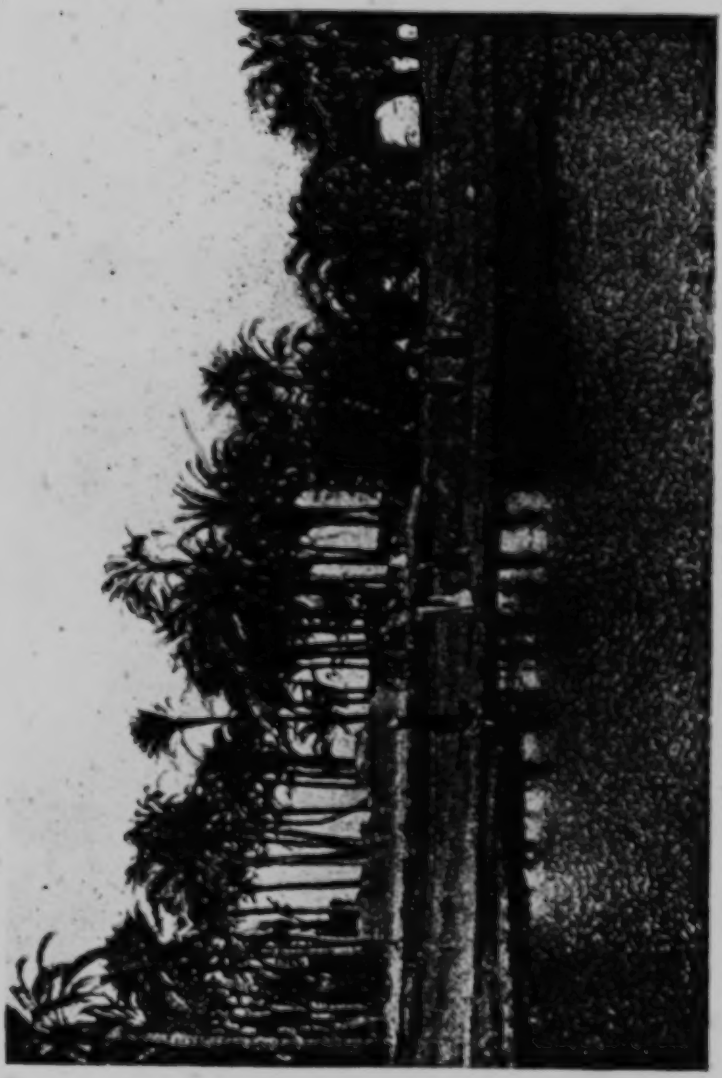

FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the *ukht* of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *ḳūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *ḳūz* is a large tin mug, and anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *ḳūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January-June, 1926, pp. 163-169.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE LAW OF REVENGE

and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. [312] [685] [241]

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312
from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [578]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [685]

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423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] 152 283 415

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. 243 789 978 These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḥamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

[312] 754 515 855 [171]

To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

754 753 755

If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 994 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 392 291 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 622 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F 291 152

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'AFĀRĪT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

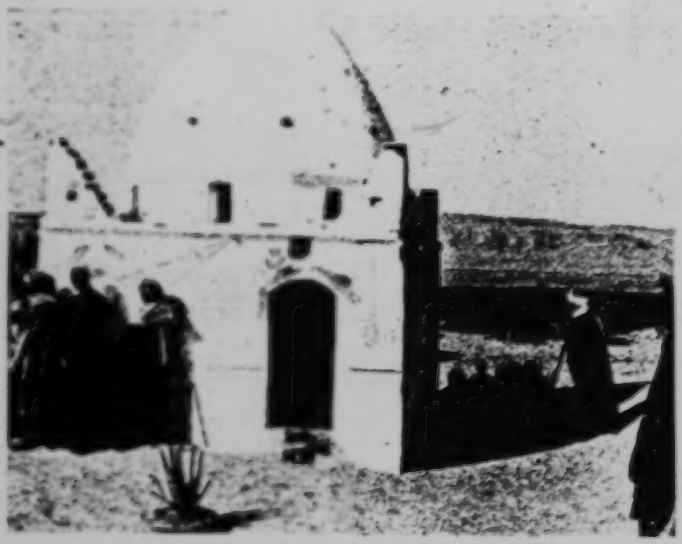

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen!

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

The modern shādūf (pp. 190 f.) finds its exact counterpart in paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

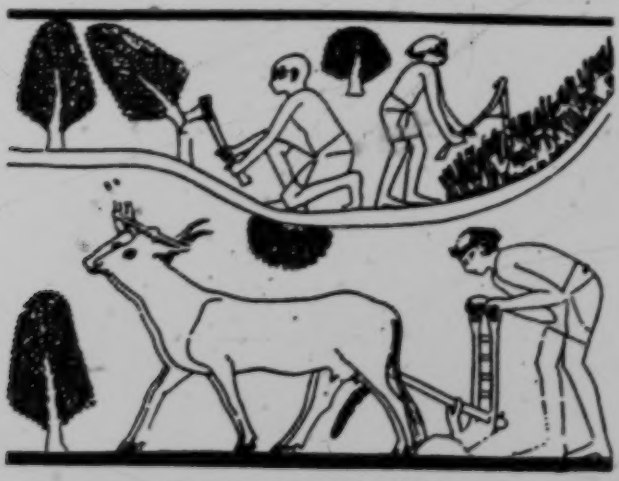

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

since the last phase of the quaternary period, over the flat edges of its bed, and spread out in ever widening layers across its mouth, encroaching on the sea (*). E F 133 134

These deposits have created on top of the granite, limestone or sand a layer of black earth, varying in depth between 10 to 30 metres in different regions.

The Nile soil which thus covers the valley consists of both coarse and colloidal clay, with an admixture of various salts. It is an amalgam of finely ground particles carried down by the Blue and White Niles. The composition of this arable soil, unlike that of most agricultural countries, is substantially the same everywhere. It has a high mineral content, which, as we shall see later, has an important influence on the food of the fellah.

This soil, once deposited, is continually irrigated and enriched by the Nile, by means of either flooding or canalisation, but always under the control of man. The time-honoured system of basin irrigation, still in use over a million feddans, consists in discharging the water at flood-time through small channels on to *hôds* — vast areas of land surrounded by dykes. The land absorbs water until it is saturated; then the remainder slowly drains away, after depositing a layer of the fine silt with which the water was laden before flowing into the basins. Each feddan thus receives about 7,000 cubic metres of water, which leave 8 or 9 tons of silt. Immediately after the water is drained off (about November) the crops are sown. They are then left to ripen until harvest-time without needing any further irrigation. The land then lies fallow till the next flood. However, many of those who farm basin land, in order to produce a summer as well as a winter crop, make use of the underground water by means of pumps, which are now so common that they have modified the system of cultivation in these districts. F 134 312 241

The perennial system of irrigation, introduced in 1840, and made possible through engineering works, of which the most notable is the Aswan Dam, now covers all the Delta and the greater part of Upper Egypt (4,300,000 feddans). The Nile no longer completely floods the land. Its water is stored in reservoirs, then distributed through barrages into a network of canals which water the land throughout the year. F 312

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (12). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (13). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (14). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 194

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

121 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence
464 on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

423 Small properties do not result solely from the sub-
425 division of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of
426 tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best
425 price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is
426 an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for
556 L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

656 The Government, by its control of the land, and still
[312] more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

231 on about 18 *kirats* of *berseem*, while in summer it consumes daily about 10 or 12 okes of fodder (*tibn*) consisting of straw, bean-stalks and cotton-seed cake. Provided its moist diet (containing 87% water) is not changed too suddenly to the dry diet of the five summer months, it will give about four thousand *rotls* of milk a year to the cow's two thousand. [262] This milk is richer than cow's milk, containing 7% of fatty substances as against 3-5%. The meat of the *gamoossa*, also, is better than veal.

231 241 All these advantages would make cattle-rearing and dairy-farming very profitable in Egypt, but the fellah does not go in for cattle-rearing; it is not to his interest to fatten his *gamoossa*, which can tackle the work of tillage and water-raising — and these are his chief needs — on a modicum of fodder. The cost of a *gamoossa* is between L.E. 12 and L.E. 25.

231 The Egyptian donkey is a much hardier beast than the horse, as the *gamoossa* is than the cow. It is also an economical animal to keep, having no unusual needs. In the Delta the commonest is the *baladi* donkey, generally black, which stands about 40 inches high, carries up to 200 lbs. and costs from L.E. 2 to L.E. 3. The white or grey ass of Upper Egypt, called 'Syrian', the kind which tourists ride around the Pyramids, is taller and more handsome. It stands up to four feet high and may be worth as much as L.E. 20.

The camel and the mule, being less adaptable, are little used by the fellaheen.

THE WORK OF IRRIGATION

241 312 When the soil has been prepared, the next business of the fellah is to water and fertilise it. He does not have to wait anxiously for rain, like the peasant of Transjordan. The water is beside him in the river or the canal, but it has to be raised and distributed. Until he has irrigated his furrows, the fellah cannot rest.

312 Like the arteries and veins of a mighty body, 12,000 miles of canals distribute the waters of the Nile in due proportion to all the crops. 5,000 miles of other canals drain the surplus water back into the Nile, or into the lakes.

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double 312
gangs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the [805]
bank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull up the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those on the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further aside.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the 312
water reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of 461
runnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is cease- 241
lessly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller channels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—five days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen at low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order to lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through the channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles. But the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, according to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by hand. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the simplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his field, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The first way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank 241
at water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they 312
support a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and 10 ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and more or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning towards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a second movement they straighten themselves, turn to the field, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of their forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation channel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity, brings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the arms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot bear it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly [461]
two pairs work turn and turn about.

241 It has been calculated that by this method little more
312 than 200 cubic feet of water, or enough for about one acre, can be raised in a day of twelve hours. Such a yield bears no reasonable proportion to the effort exerted, but the instrument is extremely cheap. As long as poverty remains, such methods will continue in use.

This method is called *nattâla*. It was already known to the fellaheen of Ancient Egypt [22] and is used by Japanese peasants, for example on Shikoku.

Second Method

One or two men crouch at the water's edge, turning and turning the crank handle of a wooden cylinder, which reaches from water level to the mouth of the runnel. The water rises spirally inside this cylinder, which is about 18 ins. across. This is the *tambour* or Archimedean screw, a wooden cylinder hooped with iron and about six or nine feet in length, according as it is turned by one or two men. The spiral is fixed between the inside wall and an iron axis, one end of which is bent into a crank, while the other turns on a stake fixed under water.

The *tambour* can irrigate two or three times as much as a *nattâla*, but it costs more and is heavier to work. Moreover, since it requires the continual use of the forearm, it is very much more tiring. Nevertheless it is still much in use, and may frequently be seen.

These two kinds of water-lifting machinery are practicable when the water level is not very low, but sometimes water has to be sought three, six or even thirty feet below the level of the field to be irrigated.

The easiest thing would be to instal a pumping engine. There are many of these on the large estates, but none on small properties; for as the fellaheen are numerous and
[181 conservative, poor in money and rich in time, this "con-
183] venience" does not commend itself to them. They solved the watering problem ages ago in a way which matches their means, and they feel no need to desert their present system for one which may possibly be better, but which is as yet new and untried.

To raise water from a depth of more than three feet the fellah uses a method as primitive as it is simple. He plants

in the earth, at the water's edge, two stakes about five feet 241
high and a yard apart. When wood is scarce, these two 312
pillars are made of cane or maize stalks daubed over with mud. They are joined at the top by a horizontal bar, like the crossbar of a goalpost. At the middle of this crossbar is balanced a lever more or less straight and about ten feet long. Its shorter arm bears a heavy rock or a great lump of dried mud, and at the end of the longer arm hang two or three yards of rope carrying a bucket, leather basket or old petrol can. This apparatus is placed in the same axis as the channel to be filled.

The fellah stands on a platform made halfway up the bank and pulls down the balanced pole until the bucket dips into the water and fills itself. A slight upward push, helped by the counterweight, brings it just above the runnel, into which it is emptied. All these movements are slow and rhythmic, sometimes accompanied by a droning chant. [533] Their variety might seem to lessen the effort, and yet the fellah finds this task more gruelling than any other. This is the impression one would gather from the melancholy tone of his chant, and it is confirmed by those who have had the patience to collect the words of such songs ([23]).

By the end of a twelve-hour day two fellaheen working alternately in two- or three-hour shifts may succeed in watering about 1/8 acre of cultivated land. One apparatus of this kind suffices for the cultivation of a feddan. The water may be taken from a well or a pool.

This method is widespread amongst the poor peasantry of the East and Far East, especially the Arabs. But the system originated in Egypt. It may be seen depicted on the oldest bas-reliefs, and nowhere else is it so much in use.

The *shadûf*, as it is called, may be used in combination. In the region of Qena and Dendera, in Upper Egypt, you may still see sets of two, three or four of these apparatus used together or in series, to raise the water from a depth. But when the level is very low the *saqia* is more often used.

The *saqia* is really a machine, though clumsy and primitive. It is made from acacia or sycamore wood and driven not by manpower but by beasts.

The great horizontal wheel, turned anti-clockwise by a harnessed ox or donkey, engages with its rough cogs a vertical

241 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth down-
312 ward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20,
476] according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is
[887 left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their
857] ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious water-
ing raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-
[656 seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose
duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at 177
all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to 242
an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more 407
commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not [464]
always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He 461
gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when 181
it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be 466
legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then 731
the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and 651
his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, [312]
each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ; [652]

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class. If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (46).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 24
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sîdi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations (50).

164 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

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312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 271 823 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river 823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tig, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn. 271 312

The creation of model villages has been more tempting to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest. 361 185 654

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

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185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The Inventor of the Shādûf.

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[174]

Shādûf is the modern name for a very ancient contrivance for raising water from the river to the higher level of the fields. There is evidence of its existence in Egypt as early as 1500 B. C. It resembles our well-sweep. Tied to the longer end of the lever by a rope, usually of plaited palm-fibre, is a leather pail, while the shorter end is weighted by a large stone or a lump of dry, Nile mud. The pail is filled in the river by the laborer and then emptied into a trench in the field above. (Compare the illustration.) If the banks are high, two or more shādûfs are employed, ranged in tiers, one above the other.

Of course the name of the inventor, Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi is mere invention; just as names are frequently inserted at pleasure, in such songs.

Šawādîf
we-ḥbalha lîf
wedlauha-glūd ma'zê gudādî.
We-aṣlo mā ṭalla' eš-šawādîf
el-marḥūm Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi.

Shādûfs,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails of goat-skins.
And it was in ancient times, that shādûfs were invented
By the blessed Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi

[P. 42 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

43.

Hard Labor.

x539
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Work at the shādûf (see No. 42) at which the laborer stands up to the waist in water, unceasingly drawing the pail at the end of the lever up and down, is considered one of the hardest of tasks. The songs which they sing while thus employed, of which numbers 42—46 are examples, are usually very melancholy, both in words and melody.

Ḥakamtē, ya bēn, bi-šan'i?
baḥbaḥ el-ḫaiye!
La ummē tibki
wa-la 'amme
5 *wa-la ḫaiye.*

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps (for me),
No aunt,
5 No sister.

[776]

1. "Strangling", namely: from the hard labor. According to Maḥmûd, bēn is a designation for God.

3—5. I, poor fellow, have so little any way, and no one on earth to love me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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406
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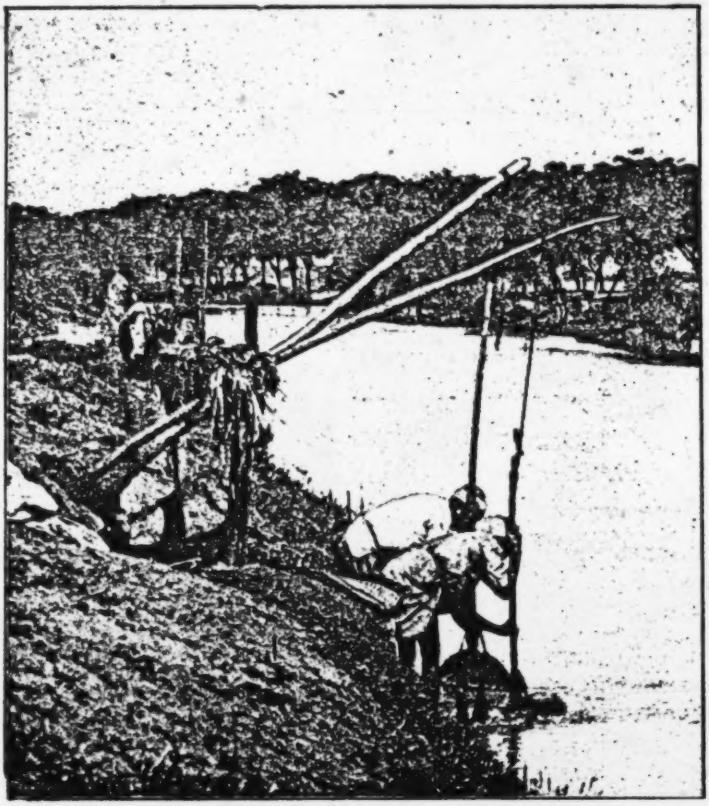

A Shādûf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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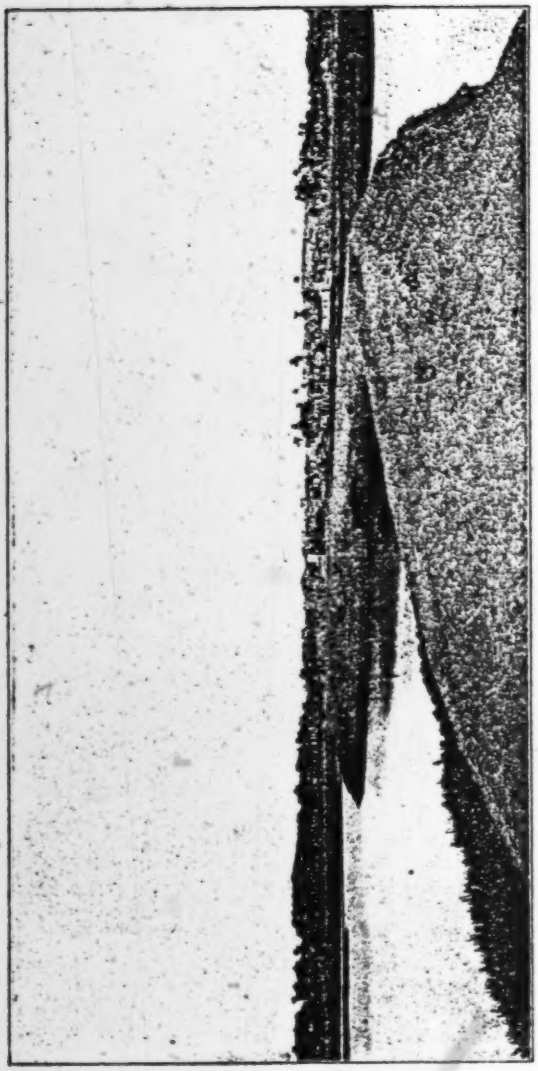

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

The dike which leads from Beni-Suēf to the town of Ehnasya.

5*

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521

In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[177] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904

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Upper Egypt

415
482
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Women Drawing Water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs
563 who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are
[576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir malya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šawirtē ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintē šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and
[312] beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

97.

Good Friends.

539x

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers. 406 [231] [312]

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether the girls of the village have already been there to get water, as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song. 883 539x [312] [462]

Ya sā'ye, yammû ṭāra,
waradet 'alēki-l-'adāra?
Waradet 'alēye ummû mandīl
wil-ka'b zēi el-ḫiyāre.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations (50).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIES. THE VILLAGE MARKET

ONE of the commonest industries in Egypt is pottery-making, and the methods employed are usually very simple. There are, roughly speaking, two kinds of pottery—hand-made and wheel-turned. When no wheel is employed the potters may be men or women, but the wheel is used only by men. I shall deal with this industry at some length, for, despite their importance for archæology, the methods employed by potters in modern Egypt have hitherto received little attention from archæologists. Several of these, however, have recently told me that my researches in this subject will form a valuable addition to the study of ceramic art, and will throw light on the different methods of pottery-making employed in much earlier times, not only in Egypt itself, but in other parts of the Mediterranean area also.

The processes in the manufacture of pots vary in different parts of Egypt, and I will endeavour to give as detailed a description as possible of those which I have studied in Fayūm, Minia, Asyūṭ, and Ḳena Provinces.

In one village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large pottery-making establishment in which both men and women are employed, and where hand-made as well as wheel-turned pots are manufactured. The potters carry on their art in charming surroundings, the scene of their labours being a beautiful palm-grove, the trees of which afford them a welcome shade.

The clay used for the pots is obtained in the neighbourhood, and is prepared for use by a woman. It is put in a hollow in the ground, and a certain amount of finely chopped chaff is mixed with it, as well as sufficient water to make it of the proper consistency. One of the women then kneads this preparation with her feet until it is thoroughly mixed.

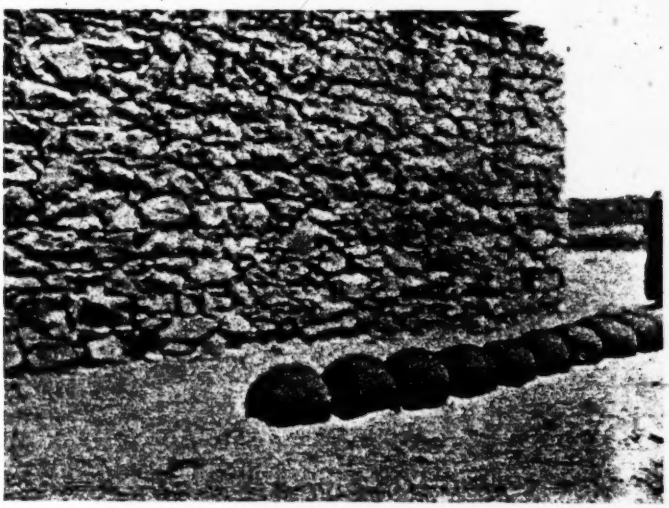
In this particular locality only women make the hand-made pots, and the process is as follows. When the clay is ready for use one of the potters forms portions of it into flat, round cakes, from two

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

On another pottery-making site in Fayūm Province which I visited large *ziyār* and pans, as well as *ḳulal* (see p. 151) and other small vessels, are made. Both hand- and wheel-made methods are employed here. The clay used in the manufacture of the larger vessels is obtained from Kīmān Fāris. This clay is soaked in water till it is of the right consistency, then *mūṣ* is mixed with it and well kneaded. The words *mūṣ* and *tibn* both mean finely chopped straw, but the former is so finely chopped that it is more like a powder. This mixture is left to soak for one day in a large hollow in the ground. It is then removed and left piled up in a heap for four days before it is ready for use. Each potter takes a large quantity of this prepared clay and places it conveniently near the spot where he is working, keeping it covered with sacking to prevent further evaporation.

FIG. 76. MAN MAKING TILES

The *ziyār* and large pans are made on the wheel, the former in the manner described earlier in this chapter; they are, however, decorated with simple designs on the upper half of the vessel. This decoration is done with the aid of an implement called a *garūt* (see p. 152, Fig. 80), which consists of a thin, flat piece of iron bent at a right angle at the top.

For making the pans the process is as follows. The revolving table is covered with a thin layer of clay, and on this a thick pillar

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

The custom of binding the cord just below the rims of the larger pans may have been also practised in former times when making the upper part of a *zīr*. As I stated earlier in the chapter, the potter usually makes incised marks with his thumbnail just below the rim of a *zīr*, the marks roughly resembling those made by the impress of the cord. This impress may have suggested a pattern, which the conservative mind of the potter demanded should always appear on that portion of the pot, even when the cord was no longer wound round it. Thus the marks made round the base of the rim by the thumbnail may be an imitation of somewhat similar markings left by a cord bound round this part of the *zīr* in earlier times.

FIG. 78. PANS BOUND WITH CORDS DRYING IN THE SUN

Smaller vessels, such as *ḳulal* (singular *ḳulleh*) (Fig. 79), are also made at this factory, and the clay used is obtained from Begīg, or Abgīg, as this village is sometimes called. *Ṭafl* (yellow clay) brought from Kīmān Fāris is mixed with the ordinary clay, the proper proportions being two-thirds ordinary clay to one-third *ṭafl*. These two materials are laid in water to soak till they are quite soft. They are then removed to a deep cavity dug in the ground, where a man kneads them with his feet. The mixture is taken out and piled in a heap, so that the superfluous moisture may evaporate.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 When it is ready for use each potter takes a quantity from this
415 store, and places it in his hut, covering it, as usual, with sacking.
317 A large lump of clay, worked up into a thick bolster shape, is taken and placed on the round table above the wheel. From this quantity of clay a number of *ḳulal* are made, each one, on completion, being cut off from the mass of clay by a string attached to a short stick (Fig. 80).

FIG. 79. TWO TYPES OF ḲULLEH OR WATER-BOTTLE

323 The potter begins by hollowing out the upper portion of the
413 clay with his thumb, turning the wheel with his foot all the time,
415 and slowly drawing up the sides of the vessel, which at the first stage resembles a bowl with thick sides. Then this is gradually shaped into a slender vessel by drawing up the sides, which, of course, become much thinner, until the *ḳulleh* is formed. The grooving

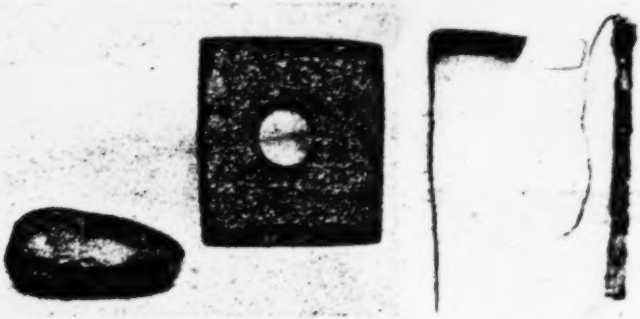


FIG. 80. POLISHING STONE, SĀDIF, GARŪT, AND STRING FOR CUTTING OFF FINISHED POTS

and final shaping is done with the aid of an implement called a *sādif*, a small, thin square of iron perforated in the centre (Fig. 80). The *sādif* is also used for incising the simple designs to be seen on the *ḳulal* made in this locality. The *ḳulleh* is then, as
323 stated above, cut off by a string. The *ḳulal* are sun-baked for one day, then put into the oven, the fire being kept alight for four

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

[323] The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[939] [1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1946.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIES. THE VILLAGE MARKET

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The clay used for the pots is obtained in the neighbourhood, and 317 is prepared for use by a woman. It is put in a hollow in the 323 ground, and a certain amount of finely chopped chaff is mixed with 462 it, as well as sufficient water to make it of the proper consistency. One of the women then kneads this preparation with her feet until it is thoroughly mixed.

In this particular locality only women make the hand-made pots, 323 and the process is as follows. When the clay is ready for use one 462 of the potters forms portions of it into flat, round cakes, from two

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 462 to three inches thick. Another woman takes one of these cakes and places it on an upturned pot with rounded base which stands in a shallow pan filled with chaff. The upturned pot can be turned round and round in the pan at the will of the potter. The cake of clay is moulded over the base of the upturned pot, and the potter pats and smooths it into shape with one hand and with a potsherd held in the other hand. When this part of the process is completed she removes the clay, now formed into a hemispherical shape, and places it on the ground beside her. She goes on dealing

[415]

FIG. 60. SMOOTHING OVER THE JOIN IN POT-MAKING

with the cakes of clay in this way until she has a number of such shapes prepared. She then takes two of these, and bends the edges of both inward, moistening them, as she does so, with water from a bowl placed near her. The two shapes are now put together, rim to rim, the woman again moistening her hand with water to effect the join, which she first smooths over with her hand and then with a potsherd or a curved piece of wood[1] (Fig. 60).

The vessel is now a perfect sphere. The opening is cut with the woman's thumbnail (Fig. 61). She keeps her hand steady with the thumb in position, and turns the pot round rapidly as it rests on the ground, or in the pan, thus making a perfectly circular

[1] See below, p. 141, footnote.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 415 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage, 323 which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

415 142 291

FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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thick rim, is now put to sun-bake again, the rope being still left coiled round the lower half. No rope is put round the upper part, but large nicks are impressed in the clay with the thumbnail just below the rim. 323

After the sun-baking is completed the vessels are placed in a kiln to be fired, the cords being previously removed (Fig. 64), though the impress made by the cord remains on the pot even after baking.

FIG. 63. COILING THE FLAT SAUSAGE OF CLAY ROUND THE LUMP OF CLAY ALREADY ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL

[091]

A pattern similar to that effected by the rope is employed for the decoration of pots in many countries; but this practice of strengthening and supporting the weakest part of the pot, or the part which receives the greatest pressure, by coiling rope round it probably suggested this decoration in the first instance. When such a practice has died out, possibly owing to greater skill achieved by the potters, the pattern originally made by the impress of the cord upon the pot is imitated for purely decorative purposes.[1] With the Egyptian potters the use of the cord is, as I have already stated, simply to support the thicker and heavier part of the *zīr* while sun-baking, and the impress left on the vessel does not seem to have any æsthetic value attached to it.

[1] I am indebted to Mr Henry Balfour, Curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, for this suggestion.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 Smaller vessels, such as the *ḳulleh* (see below, Fig. 79), are also made on the wheel, these being formed out of a single lump of clay. The potter, from long experience, knows exactly how large the lump must be for the formation of each vessel.

323 415 Near another village in Asyūṭ Province I saw the three following processes employed in the manufacture of a single pot. The vessels being made were large and globular in shape, and three people, a

[415]

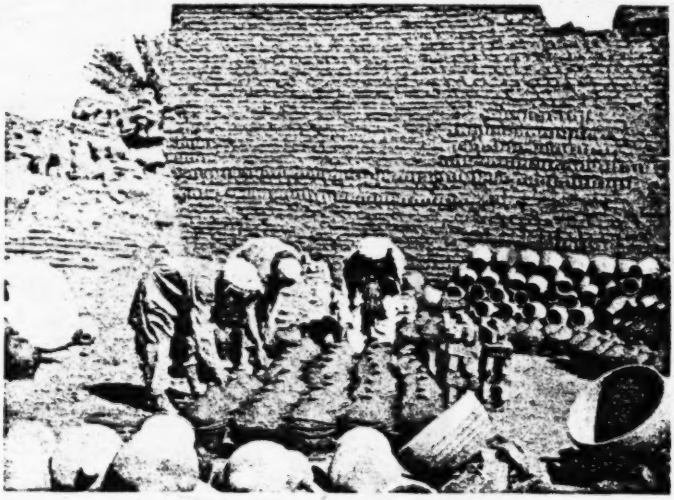

FIG. 64. REMOVING THE CORDS FROM THE POTS BEFORE PLACING THEM IN THE OVEN

woman and two men, were each responsible for one process, besides a fourth person, a man, who prepared and kneaded the clay. The clay was obtained in the neighbourhood, and chaff only was mixed with it. There was a kiln near by for the firing of the vessels (Fig. 65).

323 The first part of the pot was made by the woman. She took a large lump of clay, placed it in a round, shallow hollow in the ground, previously prepared and made very smooth, and then pounded the clay into the shape of this mould by means of an object, rather like a cottage loaf in appearance (Fig. 66), made of hard baked clay. By this means the base of the pot was constructed. She then took a potsherd, and with it and the other hand

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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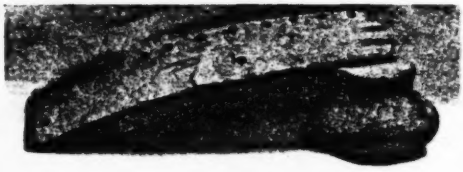
drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323 thick sides.

Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the

[291] [192] [516]

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

[291] [413] [130]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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415
516
291
563

FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

[page 144]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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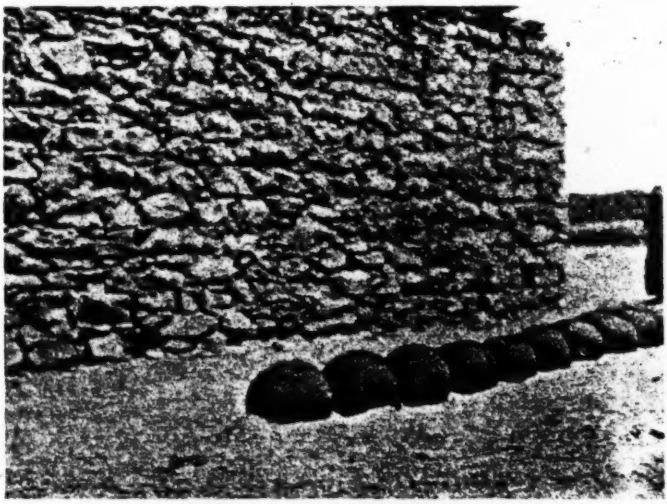
Upper Egypt

should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *ṭafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are

[291]

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman [531] artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The [386] paint, which is made of a material called *mughreh* (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freehand, and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work from.

The pots are now ready for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready for them, but they can be put on one side for a short time without any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

323
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891

FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

[page 147]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

373 372 Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531] [291] [415] [516]

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

373 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

On another pottery-making site in Fayūm Province which I visited large *ziyār* and pans, as well as *ḳulal* (see p. 151) and other small vessels, are made. Both hand- and wheel-made methods are employed here. The clay used in the manufacture of the larger vessels is obtained from Kīmān Fāris. This clay is soaked in water till it is of the right consistency, then *mūṣ* is mixed with it and well kneaded. The words *mūṣ* and *tibn* both mean finely chopped straw, but the former is so finely chopped that it is more like a powder. This mixture is left to soak for one day in a large hollow in the ground. It is then removed and left piled up in a heap for four days before it is ready for use. Each potter takes a large quantity of this prepared clay and places it conveniently near the spot where he is working, keeping it covered with sacking to prevent further evaporation.

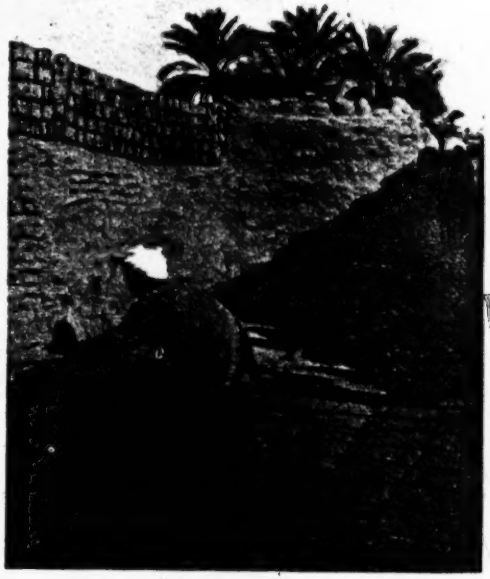

FIG. 76. MAN MAKING TILES

The *ziyār* and large pans are made on the wheel, the former in the manner described earlier in this chapter; they are, however, decorated with simple designs on the upper half of the vessel. This decoration is done with the aid of an implement called a *garūt* (see p. 152, Fig. 80), which consists of a thin, flat piece of iron bent at a right angle at the top.

For making the pans the process is as follows. The revolving table is covered with a thin layer of clay, and on this a thick pillar

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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The custom of binding the cord just below the rims of the larger pans may have been also practised in former times when making the upper part of a *zīr*. As I stated earlier in the chapter, the potter usually makes incised marks with his thumbnail just below the rim of a *zīr*, the marks roughly resembling those made by the impress of the cord. This impress may have suggested a pattern, which the conservative mind of the potter demanded should always appear on that portion of the pot, even when the cord was no longer wound round it. Thus the marks made round the base of the rim by the thumbnail may be an imitation of somewhat similar markings left by a cord bound round this part of the *zīr* in earlier times.

FIG. 78. PANS BOUND WITH CORDS DRYING IN THE SUN

Smaller vessels, such as *ḳulal* (singular *ḳulleh*) (Fig. 79), are also made at this factory, and the clay used is obtained from Begīg, or Abgīg, as this village is sometimes called. *Ṭafl* (yellow clay) brought from Kīmān Fāris is mixed with the ordinary clay, the proper proportions being two-thirds ordinary clay to one-third *ṭafl*. These two materials are laid in water to soak till they are quite soft. They are then removed to a deep cavity dug in the ground, where a man kneads them with his feet. The mixture is taken out and piled in a heap, so that the superfluous moisture may evaporate.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 415 317 When it is ready for use each potter takes a quantity from this store, and places it in his hut, covering it, as usual, with sacking. A large lump of clay, worked up into a thick bolster shape, is taken and placed on the round table above the wheel. From this quantity of clay a number of *ḳulal* are made, each one, on completion, being cut off from the mass of clay by a string attached to a short stick (Fig. 80).

FIG. 79. TWO TYPES OF ḲULLEH OR WATER-BOTTLE

323 413 415 The potter begins by hollowing out the upper portion of the clay with his thumb, turning the wheel with his foot all the time, and slowly drawing up the sides of the vessel, which at the first stage resembles a bowl with thick sides. Then this is gradually shaped into a slender vessel by drawing up the sides, which, of course, become much thinner, until the *ḳulleh* is formed. The grooving

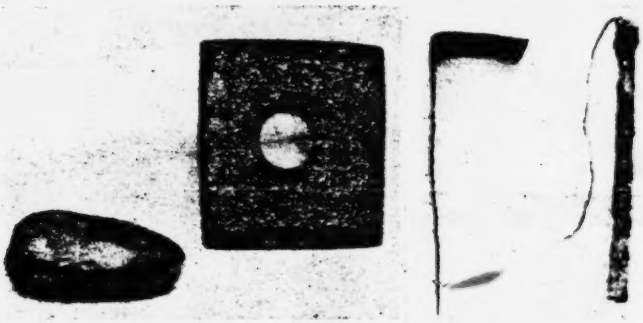

FIG. 80. POLISHING STONE, SĀDIF, GARŪT, AND STRING FOR CUTTING OFF FINISHED POTS

and final shaping is done with the aid of an implement called a *sādif*, a small, thin square of iron perforated in the centre (Fig. 80). The *sādif* is also used for incising the simple designs to be seen on the *ḳulal* made in this locality. The *ḳulleh* is then, as stated above, cut off by a string. The *ḳulal* are sun-baked for 323 one day, then put into the oven, the fire being kept alight for four

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323 ●
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [174]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4
Ancient Egypt MR5

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

The accounts of the two inter-village fights given on pp. 129 ff. bear striking resemblances to the account given by Juvenal, in his famous Fifteenth Satire, of the fight between the inhabitants of Ombos and Dendereh. That fight and one of those that I witnessed occurred at the celebration of a local religious festival, and, moreover, it and the fight described by me on p. 130 began with stone-throwing.

A [192]

FIG. 170. ANCIENT AND MODERN POTSHERDS, SHOWING CORD-MARKINGS, THE LOWER ANCIENT, THE TWO ABOVE MODERN

FA 323

Though the pots used in a modern Egyptian village differ greatly in shape from those used in ancient times, the modern potter seems to employ much the same methods as did his ancestors in the manufacture of his vessels (Figs. 168, 169).

A [532]

As can be seen from the photograph of the Eighteenth-Dynasty sherd (Fig. 170) picked up by me at el-ʿAmarneh, the ancient like the modern potter used cord to strengthen the large pots before they were baked (see pp. 138, 150 f.); he likewise separated the newly turned vessel from the mass of clay beneath it by cutting it off with a string (Fig. 171, and see p. 152).

FIG. 171. CUTTING THE NEWLY MADE VESSEL FROM THE CLAY BENEATH IT
After F. Ll. Griffith, *Beni Hasan*, Part IV, Pl. XX.

The ancient kilns closely resembled the modern ones in shape, and like them were evidently roofless, for a painting in a tomb-chapel at Beni Ḥasan (Fig. 168) shows the flames issuing from the top (*cf.* p. 148 and p. 141, Fig. 65). This painting also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

shows (Fig. 169) two men preparing the clay by kneading it with their feet (*cf.* pp. 135, 151).

The resemblance of the ancient to the modern clay granaries

FIG. 172. ANCIENT BRICK-MAKERS
After P. E. Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara* (London, 1900), Pl. XXI.

has already been pointed out (p. 280). Tall granaries standing on the ground, such as I saw at el-Kāb (p. 153), were of course exceedingly common in ancient Egypt.[1]

The ancient and modern methods of brick-making (p. 154) are identical, as can be seen from Fig. 172. The Twelfth-Dynasty brick-mould found by Professor Petrie at el-Lāhūn (Fig. 173) is exactly like that used at the present day (see p. 154, Fig. 81).[2]

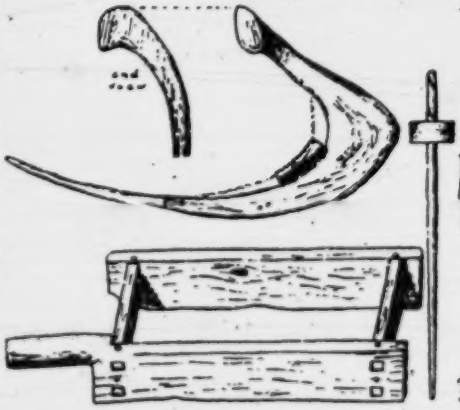

FIG. 173. TWELFTH-DYNASTY SICKLE, SPINDLE, AND BRICK-MOULD
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, Pl. IX.

Sheep-dung, which is still commonly used as fuel in Egypt, was similarly employed anciently, certainly during the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and so, too, probably was cow-dung. Herodotus

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 60a, 63; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 173, Fig. 31; Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] See also W. Wreszinski, *Bericht über die photograph. Expedition* (Halle a. S., 1927), Pl. 13, B.
[3] See T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may ●[326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 787
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The
nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, 842
and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [569]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 787
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

---

(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every house- 372
wife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this 857
fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses.

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain 285
kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket [462]
at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture.

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

[340]
[291]
[331]

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general [482]
use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

181 The dwelling of the fellah, like his work, derives its character from the soil, the manner of his life, and the social environment. The fellah is housed by the same earth that feeds him. He is a man of the soil in the true sense of the word. Here it is true that matter determines form.

333 The staple building-material is a mixture of clayey soil,
331 straw (from barley, beans, or flax), cow-dung, and Nile water.
342 This may be smeared over both sides of a rough framework of maize stalks, palm leaves, or reeds, to make the mud walls of the poorest type of house. It may be poured into wooden moulds to make crude bricks (*tûb akhdar*), which are dried in the sun and then used for building. The mortar used to join them is made of the same simple mixture, and so is the plaster which sometimes covers and protects the walls.

A wall so constructed, to be strong enough, must be from twelve to eighteen inches thick. A fellah with money to spare will build on a foundation of kiln-baked bricks (*tûb ahmar*) or of limestone rubble. This prevents the damp

333
331
that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 342

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare 342 by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, [137] sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [513] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Ancient Egypt MR5

shows (Fig. 169) two men preparing the clay by kneading it with their feet (*cf.* pp. 135, 151).

The resemblance of the ancient to the modern clay granaries

FIG. 172. ANCIENT BRICK-MAKERS
After P. E. Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara* (London, 1900), Pl. XXI.

has already been pointed out (p. 280). Tall granaries standing on the ground, such as I saw at el-Kāb (p. 153), were of course exceedingly common in ancient Egypt.[1]

The ancient and modern methods of brick-making (p. 154) are identical, as can be seen from Fig. 172. The Twelfth-Dynasty brick-mould found by Professor Petrie at el-Lāhūn (Fig. 173) is exactly like that used at the present day (see p. 154, Fig. 81).[2]

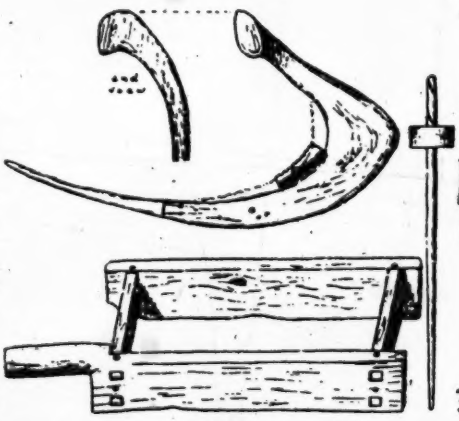

FIG. 173. TWELFTH-DYNASTY SICKLE, SPINDLE, AND BRICK-MOULD
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, Pl. IX.

Sheep-dung, which is still commonly used as fuel in Egypt, was similarly employed anciently, certainly during the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and so, too, probably was cow-dung. Herodotus

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 60*a*, 63; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 173, Fig. 31; Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] See also W. Wreszinski, *Bericht über die photograph. Expedition* (Halle a. S., 1927), Pl. 13, B.
[3] See T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.

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This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the [137] Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

346
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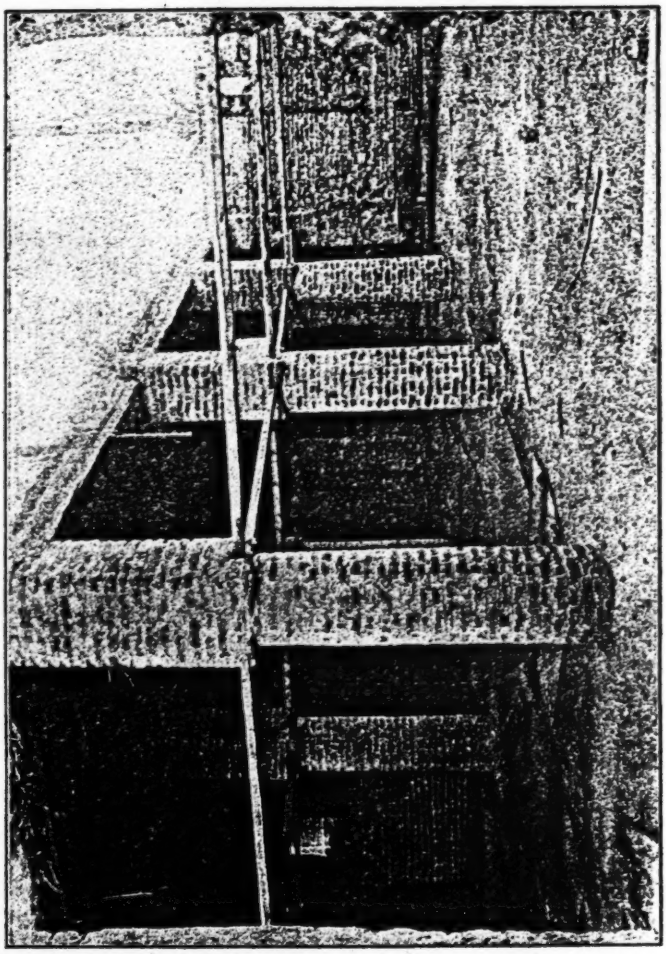

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Interior of a Village Mosque.
Ehnasya in Middle Egypt.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

340 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

74.

A Thief in the Night.

539x

This song was usually attached to No. 125.

Of course not a thief who is seeking for valuables. The girl speaks:

Bil-lēl gāni ḥarāmi,
biṭ-ṭūb ṭauwaḥ ʿalēye.
We-nādêt, ma-ḥaddê gāni.

There came a thief by night to me,
And bits of brick he threw at me.
I called, but no one came to help me.

2. Modern Egyptian bricks are exactly like the ancient ones, sun-dried only, not baked. They consist of the tough, Nile mud, which is deposited by the inundation; "bits of brick" are, therefore, rather harmless missiles. 539

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out (74). 654 341 361

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit (74). 653 654 657

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be 623 744

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered [182] with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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182 and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of
[342] storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each
183 sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very
291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same
[622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of
[554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly
464 considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign
[656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[584] repeated by the girl's father: 'I have married my daughter X to Y accepting the payment on which the people of the two sides concerned have agreed in the manner prescribed by the Holy Book and the Way of the Prophet.' The contract was then signed by the two fathers as well as another witness for each side.[1] This was followed by the reading of the 'Fatiha' and [583] the giving of the marriage-payment (mahr) to the bride's father. In this case the amount was ten pounds paid in advance and two pounds to be paid later. According to the village practice, the payment always consists of two parts; the greater part (usually three-quarters of the total) is paid over after writing the contract and is called 'mugaddam' (in advance), [586] while the other, called 'muakhar' (the delayed), is only payable in case of divorce. All these procedures in the ceremony described here were followed, as usual, by a specially prepared meal ending with the reading of the 'Fatiha' and a prayer to God that He might help in making this marriage successful and fruitful. While all this was taking place, the girl's mother and her female relatives, but not the boy's mother or his female relatives, were singing and uttering their joy-cries now and again. The 'maazoon' then left with his money gift from the bridegroom's father and sugar and corn from the bride's family. Thus the ceremony of 'agreement' (tibah) ended.

The agreement between the two families was followed by their fixing [585] the 'night of marriage' (lailat addukhla), and this followed a fortnight later.[2] In the meanwhile, the bridegroom took his weekly presents to the [431] girl's house on the market day. These presents usually consist of meat, sweets, fruit and similar delicacies. The girl's mother returned the handkerchief on the basket in which these gifts were sent with presents of pigeons and flour. During his visits in this period, the boy, as expected, was not allowed to see the girl, being usually met by the mother and father. During this period also the girl's family were preparing her house and [342] decorating it. They had to build an extra room, and thus the newly-weds' apartment consisted of two rooms, one with a completely covered roof with only two small holes as windows, while the front room was half-covered. This is a typical way of building a house in Silwa, making the inner room for use in winter and the outer for summer. At the same time, the girl's family were getting together her jewellery, by buying bits and borrowing others.

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl composed of two black

[1] According to Islamic Law there must be two witnesses for each side to sanction the marriage. It must be noted here that the writing of the contract at this stage is not like an engagement; it is religiously binding as if actual marriage had taken place. If the bride or the bridegroom happens to die immediately after the contract, the surviving partner is entitled to have a share in any property.

[2] It literally means 'the night on which the bridegroom enters in unto the bride'. It must also be noted here that Moslems regard marriage as essentially a civil contract, the validity of which depends only on the agreement of both sides. See Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, London, 1914.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in ; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings ; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

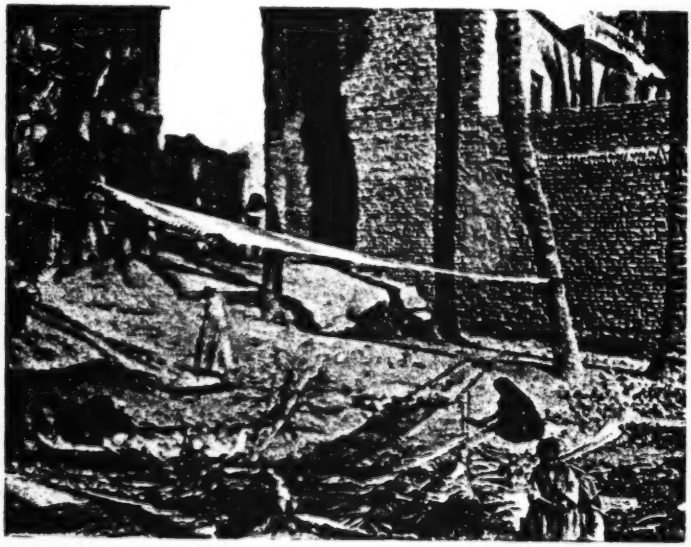

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated on the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *ǵalālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363
443
291
342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud ; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of E [152] women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time [302] piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on E the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite [123] of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared [515] the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured hand- E [292] kerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined —such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they E would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the [302] women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

348 339

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. 285 [340] [291] [331] [462]

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [482]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

293
342
291

FIG. 106. WINNOWING

293
291
465

FIG 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291]
[342]
[352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them.
[152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

'AFĀRĪT

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776 F

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. E 342 469 F 842 755

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. E 782 756 [152]

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. E 782 776 755

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many E 513 776

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 392 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 627 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796
769

FIG. 142. MŪLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

[page 254]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Coots MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The F 346 792

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER

"O my son, you are a camel. How can you marry the daughter of a king?" Then he said, "Never mind. I am going to give you a golden tray and also cups of gold, and you must go to the house of the King and enter it and give them to the King's wife. If one of the doorkeepers speaks to you give him some money, but do not speak to anyone at all." 539

So the woman took the tray with the golden cups and entered the palace of the King, and placed them before his wife, and then went away without speaking a word.

The next day the camel gave his mother a beautiful table with golden dishes upon it, and said, "Go to the palace of the King and place these before his wife, but do not speak."

When the King came and saw these beautiful things he said to his wife, "If the woman comes again you must ask her what she wants."

So when the woman arrived on the third day the wife of the King said to her, "What do you want?" And she said, "I want your youngest daughter to be the wife of my son, the camel."

When the King came and heard this he was very much astonished, and he called his vizier and said to him, "How can I give my daughter to a camel? We must consult together on this matter for a while."

Then the vizier said to the King, "I think that the camel must be a rich and noble man, for he sends you such precious things, the like of which your Majesty does not possess. I think he must be very rich and that you may give your consent. But first you must name a high price for your daughter; if he agrees well and good, we will give her to him; but if he refuses it will be better for you to deny him his request."

So, when the mother went again to the palace she was told that the King approved of her request, but as a war had broken out between the King and another country and he needed money and arms he required that the son should bring one hundred camels loaded with guns and rifles as the price of his daughter's hand.

Then the mother went home and said to her son, "O my son, the King has asked me for such and such things, and you cannot possibly obtain them, for we are very poor. Your father is only a brick-maker, and we live in a cottage made of *būṣ*.[1] Whence can we get these things?" [342]

But the camel said, "Fear not, O my mother. Stay here till I come back." Then he went out and brought a rope and hung it in the doorway of his cottage, and told his mother to take an end of the rope in her hand and to walk to the King's palace. So his mother took hold of the rope and started on her way.

As she went along a number of camels, over two hundred in number, loaded with guns and rifles, followed, and when she reached the King's palace she offered them to the vizier. Then the vizier told the King that the mother of the camel had brought more than two hundred camels,

[1] Dried *dura*-stalks.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114 I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 121 156 114 As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343 An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342 On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 342 565

The poorer classes lived in tumbledown dwellings similar to those in which they live at the present time, as can be seen from the clay models of such houses dating from the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.).[1] Houses exactly like those of the respectable but not well-to-do *fellāḥīn* have recently been found at el-'Amarneh.[2]

The portico, so marked a feature of the better type of modern

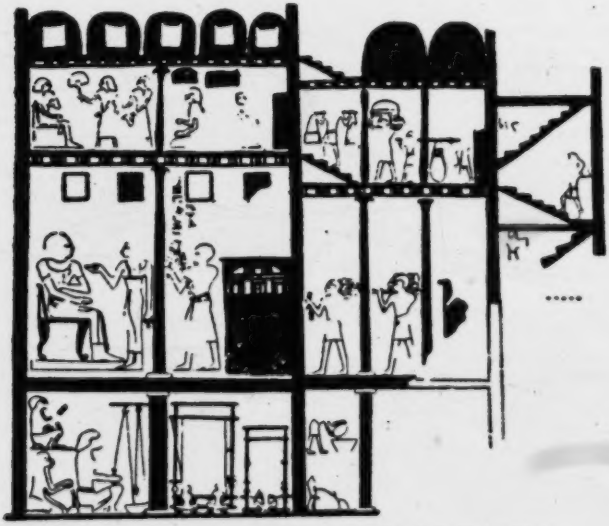

FIG. 154. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TWO-STORIED HOUSE
After A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 3.

house (*cf.* p. 228, Fig. 134), especially the country house or house enclosed in a garden, was no less a feature of the ancient mansions also, as can be seen from numerous representations of such belonging to different periods.[3]

FA 352

The *maṣṭabeh* outside the house-door (p. 32) was probably no less frequent in an ancient than it is in a modern Egyptian town

A [113]

[1] H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients* (Berlin, 1925), p. 267 W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 2.

[2] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff.; see also W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 4.

[3] See, for example, J. Capart, *L'art égyptien*, vol. i, "L'architecture" (Brussels, 1922), Pl. 110; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 207; H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1918–1920," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1920, pp. 24 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.

[2] ii, 90.

[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.

[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.

[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.

[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.

[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.

[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.

[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle-439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its lov percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is hardy exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attenton to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VII

THE FELLAH AT HOME

On his return from the East in 1932, Christian de Caters spoke as follows about the houses of the fellaheen (*Echo de Paris*, 16.6.32): "I have seen the poorest villages of a Mancha in Spain, the hovels of the Cape Verde islanders, and the reed huts of the Lundas, a savage tribe in the depths of Angola, but nowhere have I seen greater distress than in Egypt."

On the other hand, Lozach, in *Le Delta du Nil* (Cairo, 1935), finds that the fellah's home is "not far behind the stone or mud huts with a thatched roof which are still common in many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is in any case far superior to the miserable hovels in which most of the peasants of Tunisia or Algeria live".

Which statement is one to believe? It all depends on the point of view and the standard of reference. Such comparisons are in all probability misleading, especially when the cases compared are not parallel. A personal impression or opinion is not so useful as an actual description of the fellah's home, and of his life in it. This will show us how far the house is suited not merely to the fellah but also to the land he works on.

We have seen the public parts of the village. Let us look now at the private dwellings of the fellaheen, without concerning ourselves with the big house belonging to the landowner or the residence of the *'omda*.

There are certain exceptions to be noticed first: —

1. Stone houses, which are found on the edges of the desert in Upper Egypt. The nearness of the cliffs makes it possible for the fellah to transport the stones for building in his basket. Some of these houses have a vaulted or domed roof.

2. Red-brick houses, without pointing, which are quite common in Lower Egypt. These presuppose a certain standard of living.

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

181 The dwelling of the fellah, like his work, derives its character from the soil, the manner of his life, and the social environment. The fellah is housed by the same earth that feeds him. He is a man of the soil in the true sense of the word. Here it is true that matter determines form.

333 The staple building-material is a mixture of clayey soil,
331 straw (from barley, beans, or flax), cow-dung, and Nile water.
342 This may be smeared over both sides of a rough framework of maize stalks, palm leaves, or reeds, to make the mud walls of the poorest type of house. It may be poured into wooden moulds to make crude bricks (*tûb akhdar*), which are dried in the sun and then used for building. The mortar used to join them is made of the same simple mixture, and so is the plaster which sometimes covers and protects the walls.

A wall so constructed, to be strong enough, must be from twelve to eighteen inches thick. A fellah with money to spare will build on a foundation of kiln-baked bricks (*tûb ahmar*) or of limestone rubble. This prevents the damp

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that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 342

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare 342 by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the [137] Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [513] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

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654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

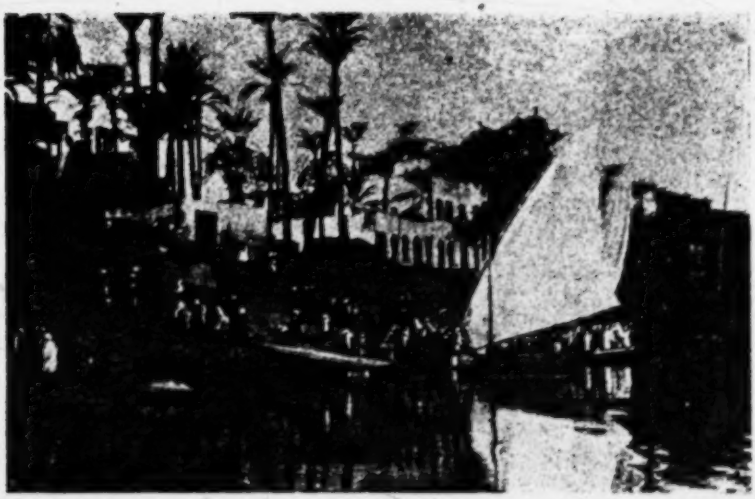
Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses, gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-index of each family, and records its progress. She brings the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing, and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the *'ezba* were washing themselves once a week, though they used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkuz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock who has been living and working there for twenty-seven years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



501
361
342
504

A village and ferry on the Nile

291

With them

Page 160(C)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Quft in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard g. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

81.

Wind and Love.

539x 832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The [192] man is a watchman (ṣafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself.

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the [342] hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7.

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it [114] being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.]

'Ali 'Elēwe bana-lo fil-gibal iḫṣas,
biddo yeḥāš el-hawa.
Hāwa el-hawa yinḥāš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
5 *weš-šōk lam yindas,*
wil-bint lam tinḫiṭib,
illa-blammet nās.

'Ali 'Elēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 563 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are [576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-'arab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

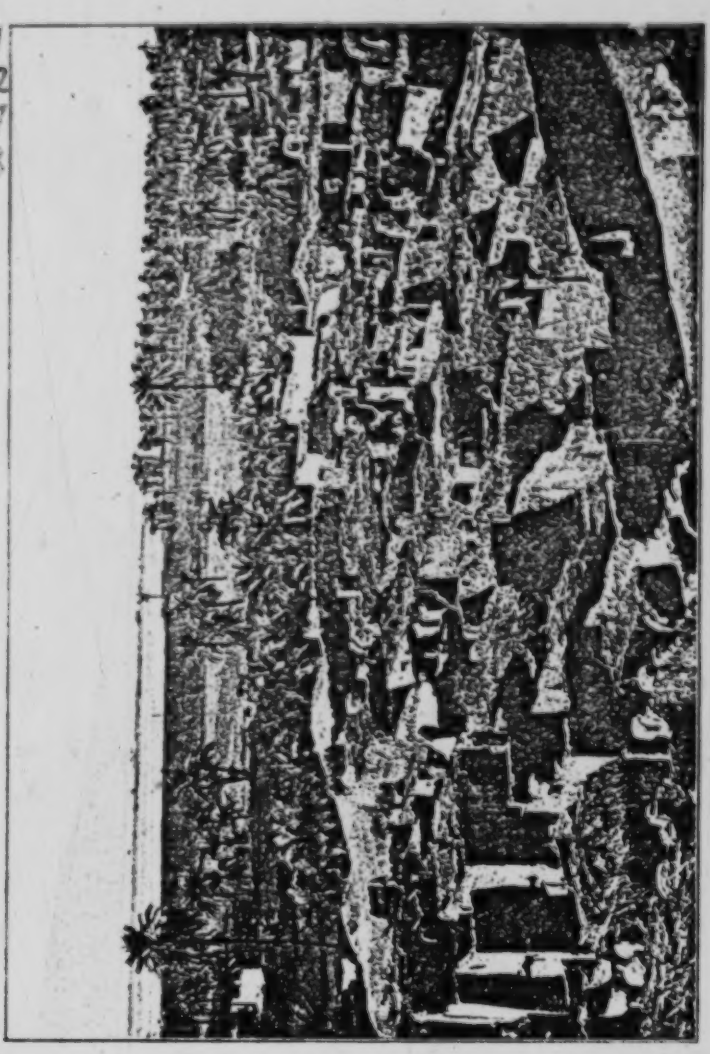
Bint el-akabir mālya 'ulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šawirtē 'a'li bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
'amalit amīre, bintē šēḫ el-'orbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] [312] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

361
342
197
133



The Village of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

98.

Unnecessary Anxiety. 539x

Dāir tedauwar 'alēye, ya ḫāli, lē?
Ana we-ḥabībi fil-'a'a,
nu"ud sā'a.
Winte za'lan lē?

Why dost thou run about looking for me, uncle?
I and my beloved are in the parlor
And shall sit there a while.
Hence why then art thou annoyed?

2. 'A'a is the name of the largest room in the harem, which lies in the upper story. For illustration see Lane I Page 18. [342]

[P. 108 is blank]

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Invitations.

113.

The girl makes pretense of showing her lover one of the sand-banks which emerge from the Nile, suffer many changes and disappear, according to the season of the year. Here, of course, it is only a cloak (Maḥmūd). 539x 932 [133]

Ya tara, ya ḥabībi,
kuntē fēn el-yōm?
ša'rak mesabsab,
we-'ēnak sable lin-nōm.
5 *Iṭla' bina 'aṣr 'āli,*
ninām we-nišba' nōm.
wafarragak 'ala-l-gezīre,
illi-tnašet el-yōm.

Where, my beloved,
Hast thou been today?
Thy hair hangs on thy brow
And thine eye is heavy with sleep.
5 Let us mount a lofty house
And sleep till we are sated with sleep.
And I will show thee the island
Which has formed itself today.

2. Literally: hangs straight down.

3. 'aṣr, literally: castle, designates a solidly built structure with an upper story. Even a house such as the middle class in the cities possess, is, in the country beside the miserable peasant-huts, designated as 'aṣr, "castle" (Vollers). [342] [565]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

119.

The Door and the Lover.

539x
832
342

Ya bāb, 'ul-li 'ala auwil meṣāḥibetak,
ya bāb, 'albi inšabak mi' ḥubbē ṣāḥibetak,
ya bāb, ana kuntē gai-lak ma' ṣiyaḥ ed-dīk,
ya bāb, ana kuntē nawi aḥla'ak warmīk,
5 *ya bāb, ana kuntē nawi aḥla'ak, sibtak.*
Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Ḥalli el-'a'l sakin fīk,
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gafik?
Ma ultē: Ya bāb, gāk ḥafsē bi-muftaḥak,
'iyūn ḥabibi terāi min bēn ilwaḥak.
10 *Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li ta'tibni,*
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma 'ultē: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtē 'alē mali,
u-lē ma 'abilt el-gamil badri u-hu-māli,
'ul-lo, ḥalli yāfi il-mi'ad!
15 *Illi 'alē si'ān ṣauwamni 'an akl ez-zād.*
'asamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-'am yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍa-li-b-waṣlo lasakkano il-alḥad!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805] [825]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground.
5 O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

*539 What shall a door do, if its mistress treat thee
832 coldly?"
342 What I said: "O door, mayest thou sink, together with thy key,
The eyes of my beloved are looking between thy boards."
10 What the door said: "Wherefore dost thou reproach me?
What shall a door do, if its mistress does not want thee?"
What I said: "O door, it is I who have spent all my money for her;
And why have I not met the lovely one, when she went to draw water?
Tell her, to come to the meeting-place at the right time!
15 She, with the beautiful hips, is to blame that I hunger and eat no bread.
In truth and by Allah, and may a year of fast be laid on me,
If she does not grant me union with her, I will give her lodging in the grave!"

13. Compare the remark on No. 77.
15. In the original it is more realistic, namely: thigh. From love-sickness I do not think of eating.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133.

A Young Wife and an Old Husband.

539x
1593

Tiddāni liš-šaib lē?
Ya-ḥsāret šabābi fi!
Eš-šaib yešabšabni
we-ʿaṣāto telehlebni.
5 *Saʿat ma-nḫušš el-ʾaʿa,*
yibʾa-l-ṛamm meḥauwiṭni.

Why do you give me to the gray-head?
It is a pity to waste my youth on him!
The old man will make me ill,
And his cane will torment me.
5 When we enter the hall,
Grief will constantly surround me!

3. One must think of superstitious usages which are supposed to incline the young wife's love toward the old man. (Vollers.)

5. The principal room of the house. See No. 98, note on l. 2. [342]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii. 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *bûṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [194]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

340 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [798] [965]

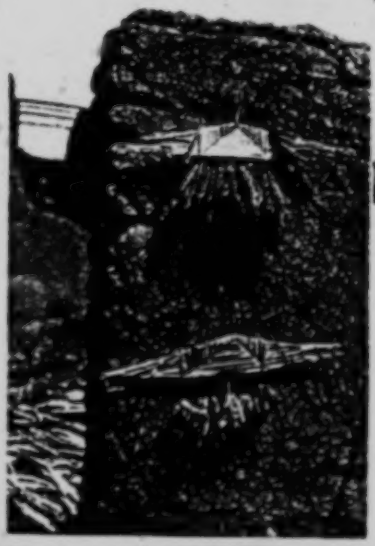


FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 121 756 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

shows (Fig. 169) two men preparing the clay by kneading it with their feet (*cf.* pp. 135, 151).

The resemblance of the ancient to the modern clay granaries

FIG. 172. ANCIENT BRICK-MAKERS
After P. E. Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara* (London, 1900), Pl. XXI.

has already been pointed out (p. 280). Tall granaries standing on the ground, such as I saw at el-Kāb (p. 153), were of course exceedingly common in ancient Egypt.[1]

The ancient and modern methods of brick-making (p. 154) are identical, as can be seen from Fig. 172. The Twelfth-Dynasty brick-mould found by Professor Petrie at el-Lāhūn (Fig. 173) is exactly like that used at the present day (see p. 154, Fig. 81).[2]

FIG. 173. TWELFTH-DYNASTY SICKLE, SPINDLE, AND BRICK-MOULD
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, Pl. IX.

Sheep-dung, which is still commonly used as fuel in Egypt, was similarly employed anciently, certainly during the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and so, too, probably was cow-dung. Herodotus

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 60a, 63; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 173, Fig. 31; Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] See also W. Wreszinski, *Bericht über die photograph. Expedition* (Halle a. S., 1927), Pl. 13, B.
[3] See T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's* house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
[366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

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8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

58.

Lamentations of a Builder.

539x 343

A builder, having undertaken to build a pretentious bath, sits before the unsuccessful edifice and ridicules his work and himself.

Ḥammām ya-skanderāni,
ḥammām, šuṛlak barrāni!
ḥammām, ʿran-illi banēto,
ḥammām, u-ma ḥaddē ṛēri.

Thou Alexandrian bath!
O bath, how wretchedly thou art made!
O bath, and it was made by me,
O bath, and nobody but myself!

2. According to Maḥmūd, barrāni, "from abroad", is used here in the same sense as when applied to money, meaning "false" or "under value". Once, wishing to tell one of our men that the small coin of Egypt is coined in Berlin, I began thus: "All your Egyptian money is from abroad (barrāni)". He took fright and interrupted me with the words: "No, thou jokest, it is full value". [192]

8;Schaffer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 And pile up the dove-jars and boards,
832 And pack the peaches and the apples!
Come, my beloved and caress me,
Else thou wilt stay out and leave me alone."

231 1. The bull which turns the sâqye. (Compare No. 97.)

2. The walls of the dove-houses are built of Nile mud
343 and earthen jars, so ranged on each other, that the openings
415 are toward the inside and the bottoms toward the outside. These jars furnish the holes for the nests. The bottoms of some of the jars are knocked out, in order to make entrance-holes. Boards and the ribs of palm-branches, form perches on the inside, while for the outside, branches of trees are usually stuck into the wall.

The illustration shows a half-demolished dove-house, the construction of which is thus made very clear.

These fortress-like dove-houses are to be found especially in Middle Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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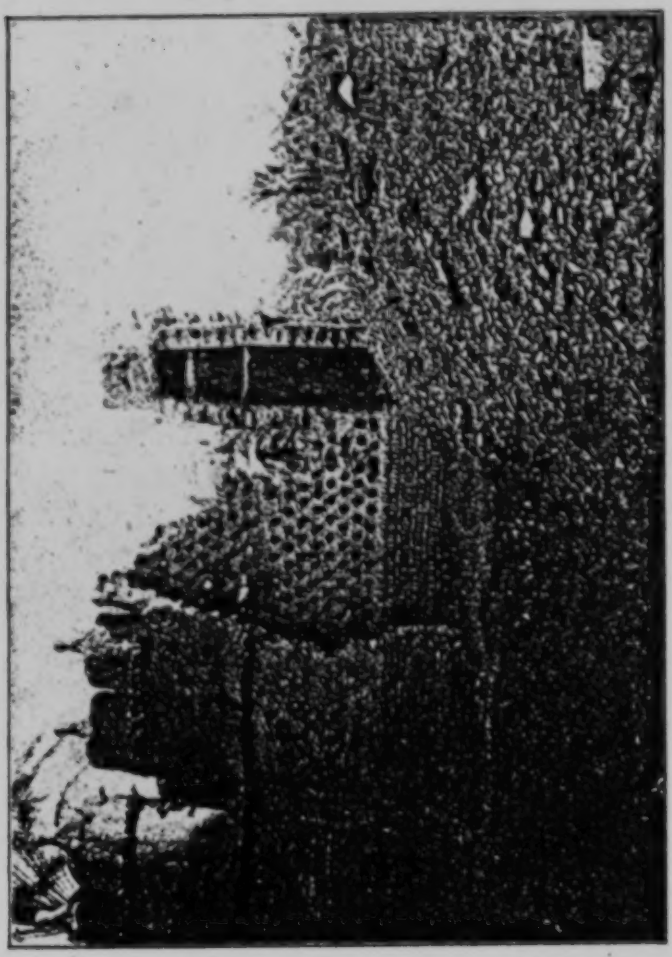

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Ruined Dove-House.
Ebnasye in Middle Egypt.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The dark of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers, youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–35.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 19–21.

231
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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [134] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is [342] available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

whether with private 871 794

tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

871 794

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

[658]

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[732] [793] [346] [562]

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of schoolchildren during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 764 492 152

I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

E 764 794 788 533

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

E [537]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 765 788 783 E [346] E 783 775

in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *'arīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven [346] from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, [197] the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

[349] [137]

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [373] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

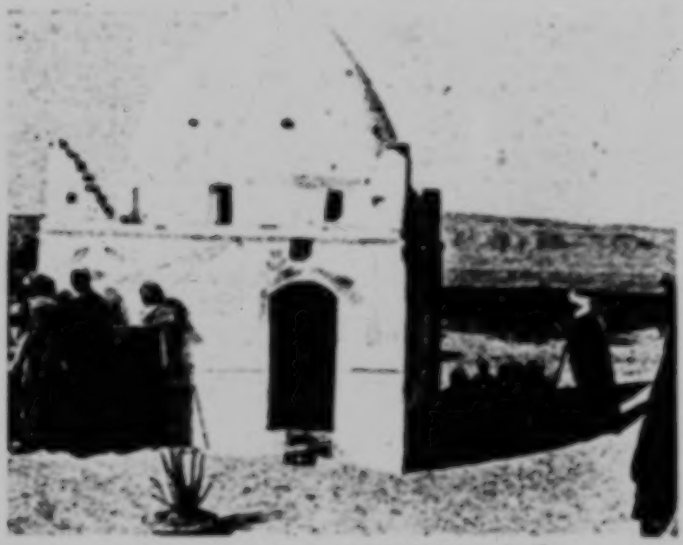

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH HASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep
[782] the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C F

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The 346 792

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F C 346 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

F C [778]

F C [133]

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

F C 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [443] [527]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.

Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F 782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

361
185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171] 64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443 186] 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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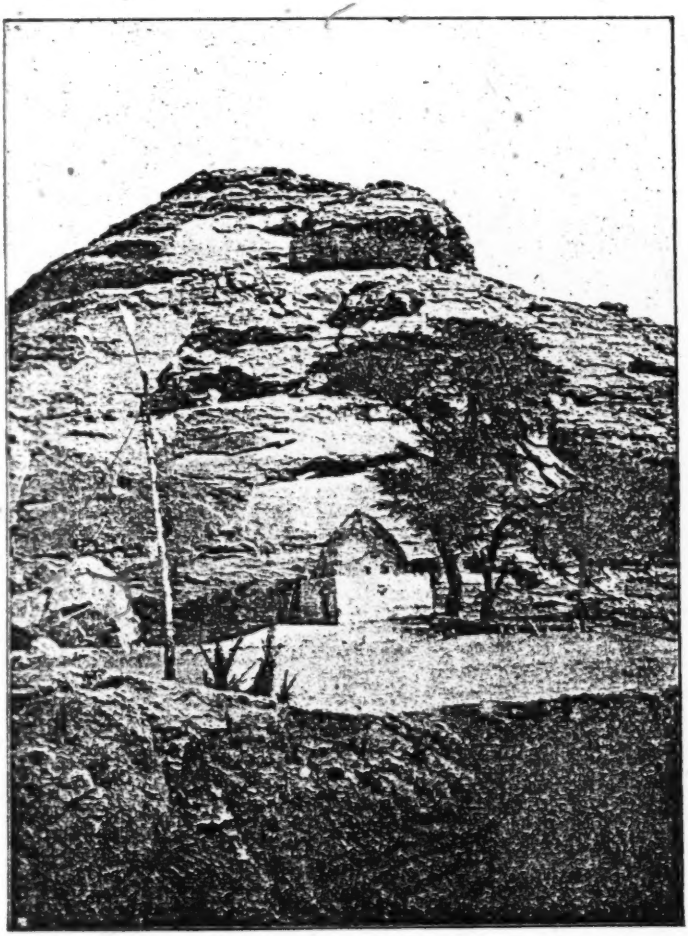

Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Grave of a Saint.
(at Ellesiye in Nubia.)

[P. 3]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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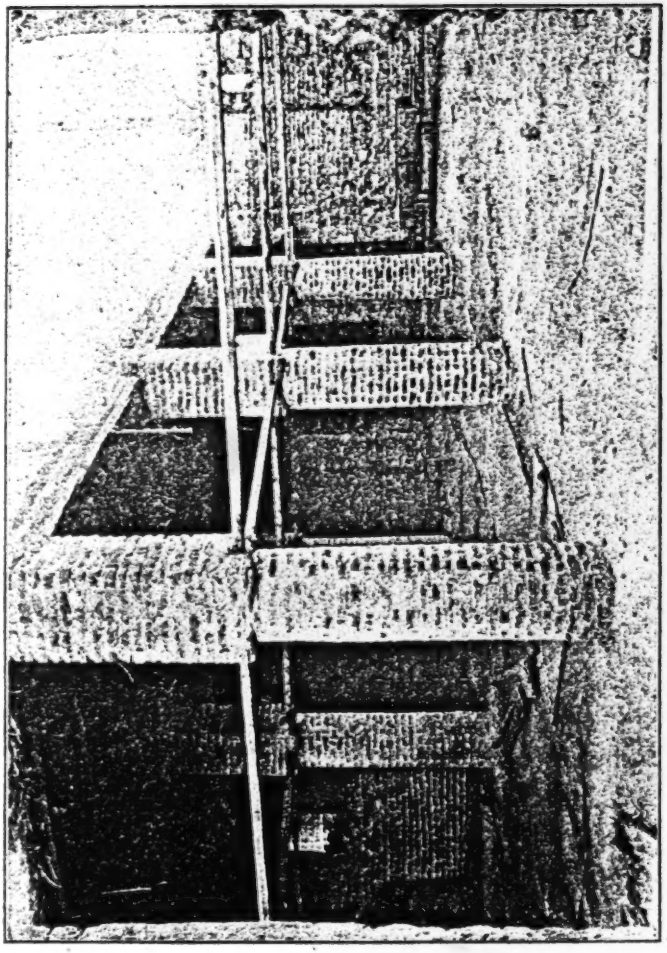

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Interior of a Village Mosque.
Ehnasye in Middle Egypt.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers, youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II— Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

361
185
654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

47.

Sympathy.

×599 ● 351 [537] In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarîm (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri māl ʿal-fasʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḫaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwāti,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
[461] And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
[609] The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
[673] 5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare
[801] the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmūds.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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351
516
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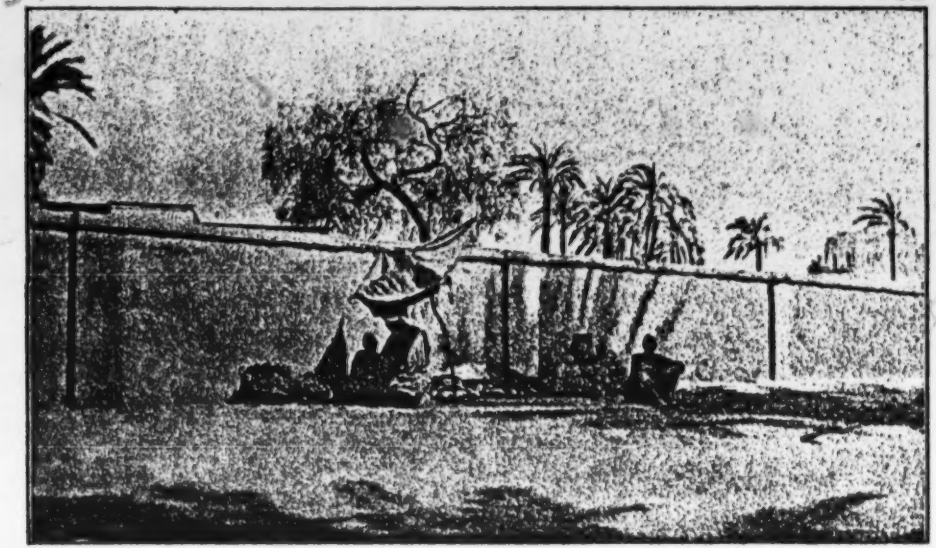

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Giseh.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy promiscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore connected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

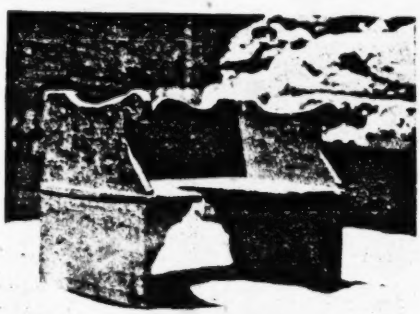

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *ḳafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*līf*). The *līf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

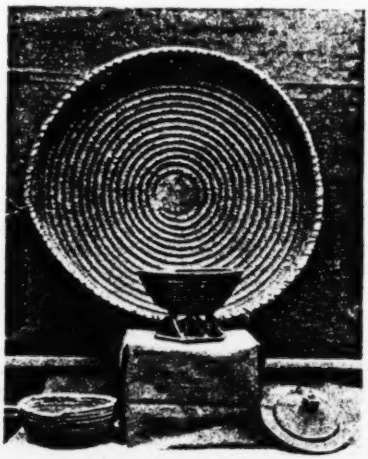

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

F 352
F 083
S [085]

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 294

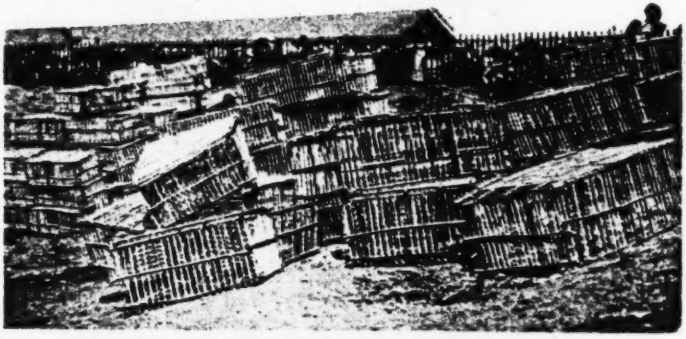

FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AḲFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

F [085] [417]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Every one who brings
goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *kafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

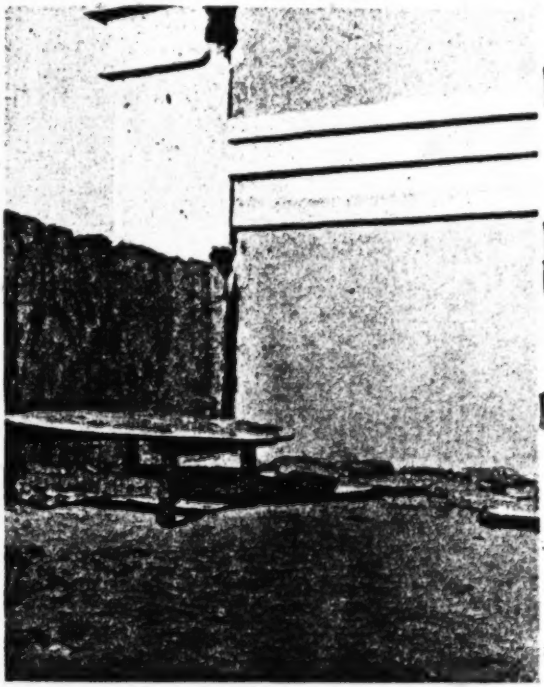

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291]
[342]
[352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them.
[152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 342 565

The poorer classes lived in tumbledown dwellings similar to those in which they live at the present time, as can be seen from the clay models of such houses dating from the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.).[1] Houses exactly like those of the respectable but not well-to-do *fellāḥīn* have recently been found at el-ʿAmarneh.[2]

The portico, so marked a feature of the better type of modern

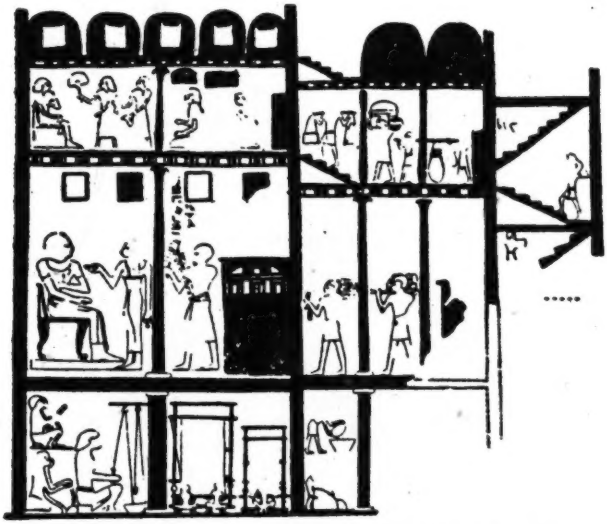

FIG. 154. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TWO-STORIED HOUSE
After A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 3.

house (*cf.* p. 228, Fig. 134), especially the country house or house enclosed in a garden, was no less a feature of the ancient mansions also, as can be seen from numerous representations of such belonging to different periods.[3]

FA 352

The *maṣṭabeh* outside the house-door (p. 32) was probably no less frequent in an ancient than it is in a modern Egyptian town

A [113]

[1] H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients* (Berlin, 1925), p. 267 W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 2.

[2] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff.; see also W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 4.

[3] See, for example, J. Capart, *L'art égyptien*, vol. i, "L'architecture" (Brussels, 1922), Pl. 110; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 207; H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1918–1920," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1920, pp. 24 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive".

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall.

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zariba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door.

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog.

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

764
133
291

PEASANT FUNERALS

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
580
298
392
298
515

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

Page 160 (B)

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 796
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [353] cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352] that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [771] the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [562] for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755 makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776 her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. 756 So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or Shaikh *Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Ḥuseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 171 156 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanûsh, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

656 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
731 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

● 353 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

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Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (48) Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

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3. Further in still is a little yard (*zarîba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [378 354 415] [296 515]

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2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the [286]
only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a [354]
window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes.

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair [826]
was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful;
for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red".

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the [826]
breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd).

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis 'agātak,
Ya miššaḫla' min dūn aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nisma' ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḫla' refers to the coquettish movements in dancing [535]
and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always
refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful"
and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[779 generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533 by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot,
527 high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
535 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
[292 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
301] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with the sticks or *būṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in ; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings ; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] [863] [515] [262] [356] [144] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR 10

Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

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The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

744 to provide public conveniences, in the effort to combat the diseases which lessen the fellah's output ? The Ministry of Public Health, founded in 1934, has given this question priority in its programme, but it has not a large budget, and most of its income goes to pay the salaries of its officials. It has, however, some genuine achievements to its credit. Sixty-seven dispensaries, permanent or travelling, are fighting bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. There are as many hospitals, with about four thousand beds in all, for serious illnesses. In 1936 there were 111 eye-clinics, which had treated 1,133,599 patients. Infant welfare is organised in some forty centres. Doctors, midwives, and visiting nurses, instead of waiting for the peasant woman to come and ask for help, go round from house to house to give treatment and advice. At least half a million visits have been made. By 1937 there were about five thousand certified midwives, who had taken a six months' course in a maternity hospital, and eight thousand of the second class, who had from three to six weeks' training.

744 747 To these splendid efforts must be added the even more devoted labours of private institutions : the dispensaries and home visits of the Franciscan Sisters of Egypt and the many other Catholic sisterhoods, the Protestant foundations, such as the C.M.S. and the American Mission, and the more recent and methodical 'social centres' established in a dozen villages in the Delta.

It is a vast field, and these efforts up to the present have affected only thousands out of millions. Even those fortunate few often lose the benefit of their medical treatment through their ignorance, their unhygienic habits, and their poverty. These are the obstacles to progress.

183 744 A model village has no power to make the fellah a healthy man, immune from sickness. The work of the authorities in the provinces is hardly more succesful. So long as the fellah keeps his present ways of thought and the ignorance that hinders him from knowing what is good for him and what is not, he will remain, in spite of all the improvements that are offered him, exactly as he is today. He will refuse [271 356] filtered water and drink the impure water his fathers drank. Give him a light, airy, healthy dwelling, and he will pervert it to his own manner of life. He will still be unable to 183 profit from the laws and institutions provided to help him.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

'Ēb 'alēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

539
527
821
[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband 'Ali, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

'Ali, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast; for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl 'Ali u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-'aginha 'uddāmha.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 **Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]**

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [291] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers, youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II— Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 631 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii, 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

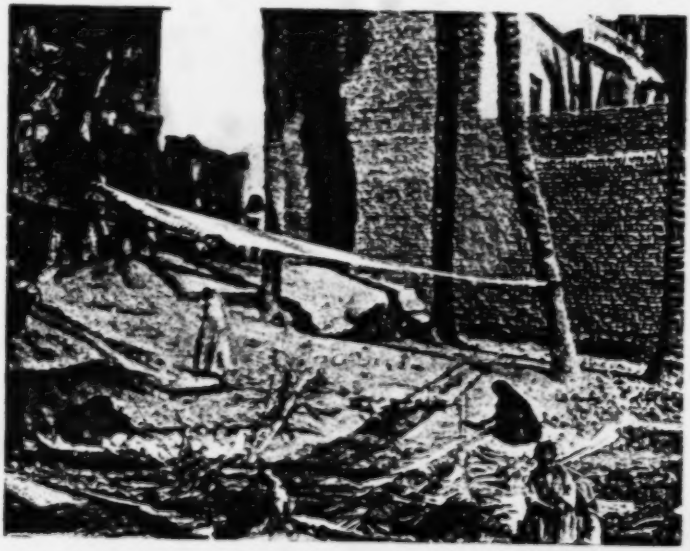


FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 121 156 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 340 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60*a*.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which should take into consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361 ●
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

Chapter VI

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

571 The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural, because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd. In the fields, as tenant or owner, he works with his wife and children; as a hired labourer, he works in a gang, swinging the *fass* or sowing seed in a concerted rhythm.

Limited as the fellah's horizon may be within the village, he works in the open air and in public more often than in the privacy of his house. The women go in groups to draw water, the children play in swarms, daily life is collective and communal. But to understand the village community, it is necessary first of all to look at the village.

361 137 Seen from outside, as it stands up in the middle of the plain or against the pale background of the desert cliffs, it is a huddled earthy mass, compact but shapeless, and crowned with bundles of brushwood. A whitewashed building, more important than the rest — perhaps a great pigeon-cote or the house of a notable — stands out from the confusion. Palms or acacias, sycamores or *lebbekhs* rise above the mass and relieve its drabness. In the bright light of Egypt these grouped or scattered trees around or in amongst the houses give a fine effect, and Brunhes has devoted a whole page to the picture in his *Géographie Humaine*. It is not for us to imitate him. We must pierce behind this magic veil, which is all that most observers can see, and probe the reality.

361 133 As the villages date from before the period of flood-control, few of them are actually on the Nile banks. Most stand back, at distances from a hundred yards to half a mile away. Others straggle along the edge of the Upper Egyptian desert, or stand huddled on a *kôm or tell*, that is to say the ruins of an ancient village or an artificial mound or dyke. In districts where the Nile flood is no longer to

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361 133
barely visible, though always very compact.

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel- [721
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

F they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town,
361 as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F The standard of living is practically invariable every-
511 where, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.
184 Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F In Europe it is often said that the church building gives
361 its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or
346 the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C
F 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a
779 million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor
779 children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the
771 five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F Of their belief in God something will be said later on.
782 Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several
796 times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*,
516 they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sîdi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([50]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

● 361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village ; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292 494] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 619 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

181 The dwelling of the fellah, like his work, derives its character from the soil, the manner of his life, and the social environment. The fellah is housed by the same earth that feeds him. He is a man of the soil in the true sense of the word. Here it is true that matter determines form.

333 The staple building-material is a mixture of clayey soil,
331 straw (from barley, beans, or flax), cow-dung, and Nile water.
342 This may be smeared over both sides of a rough framework of maize stalks, palm leaves, or reeds, to make the mud walls of the poorest type of house. It may be poured into wooden moulds to make crude bricks (*tûb akhdar*), which are dried in the sun and then used for building. The mortar used to join them is made of the same simple mixture, and so is the plaster which sometimes covers and protects the walls.

A wall so constructed, to be strong enough, must be from twelve to eighteen inches thick. A fellah with money to spare will build on a foundation of kiln-baked bricks (*tûb ahmar*) or of limestone rubble. This prevents the damp

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the 271
inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new 312
waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tig, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn.

The creation of model villages has been more tempting 361
to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago 185
established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as 654
examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest.

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

361 185 654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings, 361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level. 185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of 654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed 342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. 515] They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for [346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus [347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a 341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out ([illegible]). 654 341 361

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit ([illegible]). 653 654 657

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be 623 744

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

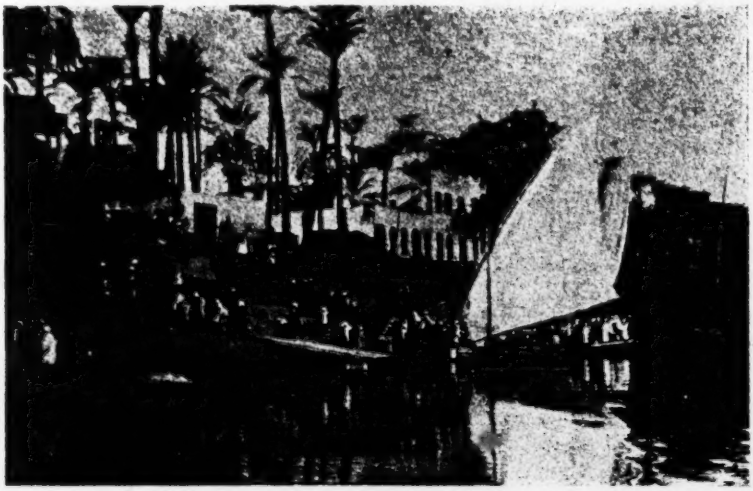
When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



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A village and ferry on the Nile

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With them

Page 160(C)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

61.

A Mother's Solicitude.

×539

[36] [481] In Middle and Lower Egypt, the villages are connected with one another by earthen dikes, which, during the time of the inundation, form the only communicating roads.

[625] The police are always at hand to imprison people. At roll-call, often, one or another of our workmen was announced as maḥbûs or "imprisoned".

Mā-lik betigri ʿal-gusūr u-ḫēfe?
bagri ʿala waladi ḫadû eṭ-ṭēfe.

Why dost thou run so anxiously about on the dikes?
I seek my son, whom the patrol has caught!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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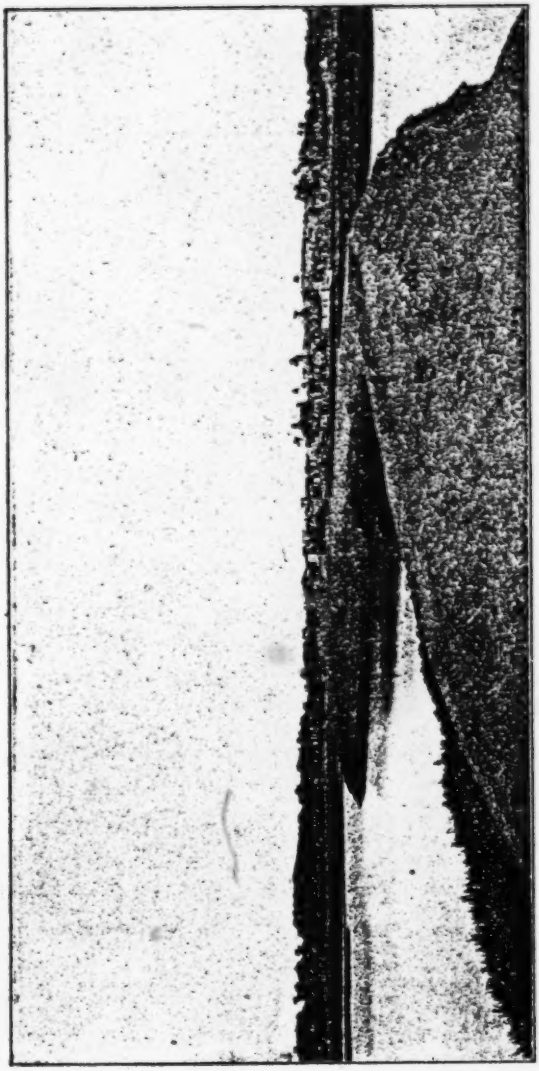

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

The dike which leads from Beni-Suēf to the town of Ehnasya.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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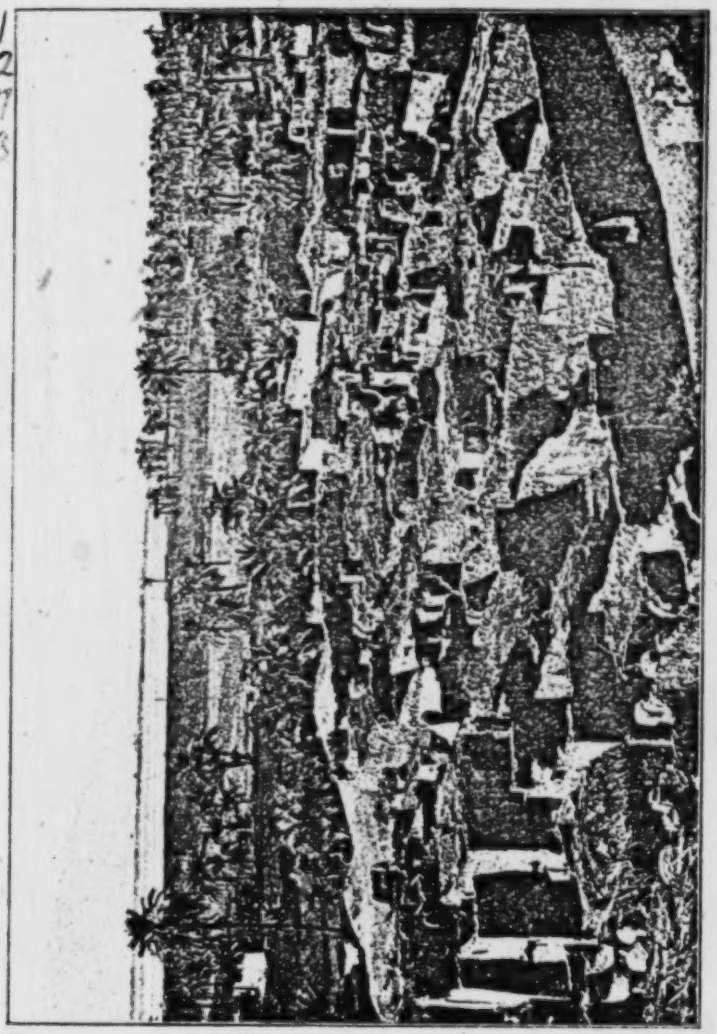

The Village of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 **Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.**[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

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352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: [192] bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often [776] long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmîye (thieves) and 'afârît (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullê ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight [172] than with us. Moreover, Abu Gûrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an [262] important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 **Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.**[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [291] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *ǧalālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

342 3. Houses of regular design on the model '*ezbas*', such as those of the Royal Domains, the Agricultural Society, and a few individual landowners.

4. Shapeless huts made by newcomers and semi-nomads out of rags, empty petrol tins, palm leaves and mud.

5. Fieldshelters (*zarbiya*): huts built of reeds, or mere screens of maize stalks set in the open country during the period of heavy winter work.

But these, as has been said, are exceptions; the typical fellah house, representing 92% of the total, is of earth. It is a dwelling without style or age, which is yet one more sign of the persistent uniformity of the Egyptian peasantry.

361 Let us walk into one of the alleys that wind through
342 the clustered village. On each side the narrow dun-coloured
363 houses stand wall to wall. They may be from five to ten
362 metres wide, and about two and a half metres high, or at the most five if there is an upper storey. The quarter is old, and the village older still, but the house itself is comparatively new. This is because the materials and the methods of construction make the building impermanent. Fires, and in Lower Egypt the Nile flood and the rain, have necessitated constant repairs, which soon leave little of the original structure.

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own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and [515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

231
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9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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512 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours,
562 yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

Before sunrise women and children are already awake and
[513] moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn pro-
515 ceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette,
[512] however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention; the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and
[368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties
may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its
court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri-
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [182]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [171]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

562 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue.

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later.

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study.

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost [illegible] for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this *respect*, *most* of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 77 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 118 118 688 648

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64 Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not
197 yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which
198 has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the
514 waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it
554 when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also
[556] involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision
[431] and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The
[156] ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in
[556] the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the vil-
176 lagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village
514 who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing
[369] contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance
[556] of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his
[431] appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

[426] there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions. 178 574 [431] [556]

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies. 178 554

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'. 178 369

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business. 178 [626]

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1] 369 [828]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 182 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social
178 structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied
[426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the
[369] material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force
[182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest,
782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an ● [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–50.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 857 593

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

867 a son meeting his father after a long absence, as well as the greeting of adults for religious men and those who are believed to be endowed with 'baraka'—holiness.

Whilst in the first five or six years the child's respect for its parents and elders is inculcated mainly through physical gestures and intimacy, the respect later on is expected in terms of a decrease in word intimacy and physical proximity. Moreover, certain manners must be observed, such as walking behind the father or an elder and not abreast of him, standing up or at least sitting properly on the ground on his approach, dismounting from donkey-back on seeing the father in a formal gathering, and so on. Whether in attending to the hand-washing of guests, the distribution of tea amongst them, or in shaking hands with them, a fairly definite order of precedence is observed by the child and even by adults themselves. On the whole, with the progress of the child in age, details of etiquette are gradually enforced upon him. It is also interesting to note in this respect that a father when taking his son of four or five years to the field, would make him ride behind him and not in front, and one cannot argue that this is merely a matter of convenience as fathers who take their sons in front of them are considered to be spoiling them.

It is important here to distinguish between two categories of behaviour with regard to respect relationships, and this distinction is mainly related to whether there are any outsiders or public onlookers. The child, for instance, is allowed a certain amount of latitude in conforming to the external tokens of respect to its parents in the intimate circle of the family, for example, to sit on the bed while the father is sitting on the ground, to make himself a nuisance with the mother, or to hit back when she scolds him. Yet this is severely disapproved of and punished if there is a visitor in the house, or if done outside the house. This is the root of the absolute bonds of kinship behaviour on formal occasions. No plea could absolve the person from not fulfilling his obligations towards his relatives on public occasions such as mourning or exchange of gifts on ceremonial occasions. The failure to fulfil such obligations, as the villagers put it, 'makes a special history for the person'. The distinction between formal and informal behaviour gradually recedes as the child grows older and he is supposed to approach progressively for all occasions the formal expectations of behaviour.[1]

The general pattern of behaviour between the child and its elders is 595 thus largely one of dominance, submission couched in the term 'filial piety'. The filial sentiment, however, is not taught to or expressed by the child in any sentimental phrases. It was a great joke amongst the children in one neighbourhood to repeat statements of an urban child whom they [369] heard saying 'I love my father, I love my mother'. Such open expressions

[1] R. Firth distinguishes between formal and informal behaviour. In the latter there are more individual differences and variations; while the former is enjoined upon each member of the society and the observance and fulfilment of formal behaviour is regarded as the sure test for the harmonious functioning of society. *We, the Tikopia*, p. 173.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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of filial sentiment are considered by the children as one of the ways in which Cairo people spoil their sons and daughters. Children's respect for and devotion to parents must be absolute and unconditional and do not have to be verbalized. Yet, on the other hand, the appeal to please the mother or father is usually invoked to persuade the child to behave properly or to perform certain duties. 'Fetch fuel for mother so that she can say that her daughter is good.' 'Wear this garment so that uncle's people will say they have a good boy.' While the affection of blood relatives is used to stimulate and motivate the child, he is not expected to express his sentiment towards them directly.

During early childhood, kinship terms are learnt, and by the age of five, the children I spoke to were quite capable of telling the categories of paternal uncle and aunt, maternal uncle and aunt, cousins and nephews and nieces. As anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out, the child does not start off in life with a full set of kinship terms, but gradually, and not without difficulty, fits itself into the framework provided for it by its elders.[1] During its development, contacts and associations, a child begins to know what type of behaviour and sentiment is expected from him towards different relatives. In terms of behaviour the above-mentioned children distinguished between those closely-related children with whom they could play freely, more co-operatively, and possibly with more superficial wrangling, and those with whom they could not play in the same way; between those from whom they could demand a piece of bread or a bit of onion, and those from whom they could not; between those who could, without suspecting malicious intentions, accept their curses and those who would resent such curses. They also knew that their close relatives are those by whom they can be protected or punished, and whom they fear and love, and to whose houses they can stray, accepting food without fear of being punished by the parents. One of the children told me that his mother punished him for going with another boy to the latter's house. She rebuked him by saying that those who offered him food would call him a son of beggars, and that it would have been quite different had he gone to his grandfather's people. Children who stray quite often into houses which are not those of close relatives, are sometimes dubbed by their elders as paupers ('fakeers', who roam about and knock at the gate of Allah). Such an excuse is given by the elders to avoid the sense of shame that their children might bring to them. In this way a child is made to learn the difference between the easy flow of mutual obligations between close relatives and the strain of accepting hospitality from distant people which is considered almost as a debt. On such occasions, one also sees the importance of parental obligations towards their children, whose hunger would reflect on their parental duties and prestige.[2]

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 270.

[2] For such connection between hunger and prestige, see Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, pp. 43-4.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living.

[841] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

[524] The influence of urban life has reflected itself in some of the sedentary

[369] games of the adults. On the market day especially, villagers who frequent the town or have worked there, can be seen playing a kind of 'draughts' (dumnah), or kind of 'trictrac' (tawlah) or cards. Because this type of play depends on 'chance' it does not win social approval, as all 'hazardous'

[525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

[1] Such a statement contains the elements of cynicism and puritanism which sometimes colour Ali's information.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

trying this test on five girls, and the Moral Ideology test on two other girls, I had to give up trying any more. It certainly requires more time and patience than I could then afford to elicit responses from girls. These verbal tests must have seemed to them fruitless and pointless. [159] [125]

For happiness

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. When we celebrated the feast, we played and went to visit the 'Sahabi'.
2. When I go out to play without taking my younger brother with me.
3. Nothing.

B. *A boy of nine years:*
1. When my maternal uncle returns from Alexandria.
2. When my grandfather comes from Port Fouad where he works at present. He has been away for a long time; we want him at home.
3. When my brother was circumcised.

C. *A boy of twelve years:*
1. When his father sent him to the Kuttab.
2. When he eats meat with 'Sakhini' and 'Gras' (sing. 'Gurs'). ('Sakhini' are onions cooked in oil, and 'Gras' are wheat loaves.) [262]
3. When the feast comes, there is no work for him and he does not go to school.

D. *A boy of fourteen years:*
1. When they circumcised his brother and paraded around the village in a ceremony.
2. When he went to the Kuttab.
3. When the harvest time comes (time of plenty) and when 'the "baraka" of God' is in the house.

E. *A boy of fifteen years:*
1. When he went to Cairo, and saw the palaces,[1] cars and the Zoo.
2. When his father wanted to examine him in the Koran, threatening to punish him if he found that he did not know it well, but he was all right, so he was happy.
3. When his father bought him a new garment and a pair of sandals.

For sadness, fear, anger and shame

A. *A boy of seven years:*
1. I was sad when my grandmother died.
2. I shall be sad if my father dies.
3. I become angry when my parents beat me.
4. When other boys strike me I become angry, so I fight them. [369]

[1] Modern houses of the city are usually referred to by the villagers as 'palaces'.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN OLIGARCHY

In Egyptian politics and society the peasantry has always constituted the primal mass, and as it were the raw material; the foundation, almost the sub-soil, on which government and society are based. This double structure must now be considered before we can look more closely at the fellah's way of life. EF 565

The façade of contemporary Egypt, modern and composite in style, is represented by the country's three great cities with their striking, many-sided activity. There is Cairo, with its two universities (having nearly 20,000 students), its palaces and museums, its scientific institutions, its international congresses and winter lecture-courses. There is Alexandria, with its busy port and Cotton Exchange, its foreign institutions, its fashionable beaches and esplanade. There is Port Said, gateway to the East, with the Suez Canal and all its traffic. These cities compose a sort of triptych, in which large and varied groups standing side by side conceal the fundamental Egypt, just as the stones of a mosaic hide the grey cement which supports them. EF 369

Just as it was once usual to speak of 'All the Russias', so today, from a social point of view, one might well talk of Egypt in the plural. There is no single Egyptian people, in the usual literary or historical sense of this word, but only a seething assemblage of the most varied types, which has no real correspondence with the country itself. Neither is there a true peasant community, but only a homogeneous mass of peasants bound to the soil and isolated in their villages. EF 101

3

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([illegible]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

421 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *ezba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee land lords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *mudiren* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [19].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture 121
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most 101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is 186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and 121
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double 183
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting 134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in 132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria. The Government's primary and secondary schools count their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-Fellah*, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal? Are they following the élite of the cities? The answer is: either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelming majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise it. (") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who developed everything in Egypt except education; with the fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no eagerness to learn; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being [312] less embarrassed, less inquisitive, and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

[868] On the whole for him this is a stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

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Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of the period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN 883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-dressing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *bûs*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with the sticks or *bāṣ* as fuel. Here, too, are set up the household granaries.

The houses, especially the better-built ones, admirably suit the Egyptian climate. There is only one thing lacking to make them really pleasant places to live in, and that is greater cleanliness within the houses themselves and without in the streets. The salvation of the people lies in the fact that they lead essentially an outdoor life, the houses being regarded almost solely as places to sleep and cook in; otherwise the mortality would be considerably higher than it is.

FIG. 7. VIEW OVER THE HOUSE-TOPS

I know how comfortable a well-kept house of the better kind can be, having lived in one for five months. This house stood on a high mound formed by the *débris* of earlier buildings; for in Egypt, when a house has collapsed or has been pulled down, the mass of rubbish is not necessarily removed, but when it has been sufficiently levelled another house is erected on the top of it. The whole of the upper floor of this house was placed at my disposal, my apartments consisting of a small bedroom and a sitting-room. The latter had two unglazed but shuttered windows, from which I could look over the tops of the neighbouring houses and be a spectator of the varied life on the roofs. Outside the rooms was a partly covered passage, from which a glorious view of the sunsets could be obtained.

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they

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372

Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531]
[291]
[415]
[516]

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323

On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

[192]
[415]

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

[379]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

348 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every house- 372 wife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this 857 fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses.

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain 285 kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket [462] at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture.

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

[340] [291] [331]

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [485]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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252 oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning
462 in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done
[392] the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak, or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is

[286] [291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North
252 of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a
[423] great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up
[262] through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared. 757 278

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better. 757 191

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment! 757 [372]

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again. 757 278

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able 757

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say "*Dastūr*" ("Permission") or "*Dastūr yā mubārakīn*" ("Permission, O blessed ones"), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 392 782

F [791] [791]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

E 26A 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say "In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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shows (Fig. 169) two men preparing the clay by kneading it with their feet (*cf.* pp. 135, 151).

The resemblance of the ancient to the modern clay granaries

FIG. 172. ANCIENT BRICK-MAKERS
After P. E. Newberry, *The Life of Rekhmara* (London, 1900), Pl. XXI.

has already been pointed out (p. 280). Tall granaries standing on the ground, such as I saw at el-Kāb (p. 153), were of course exceedingly common in ancient Egypt.[1]

The ancient and modern methods of brick-making (p. 154) are identical, as can be seen from Fig. 172. The Twelfth-Dynasty brick-mould found by Professor Petrie at el-Lāhūn (Fig. 173) is exactly like that used at the present day (see p. 154, Fig. 81).[2]

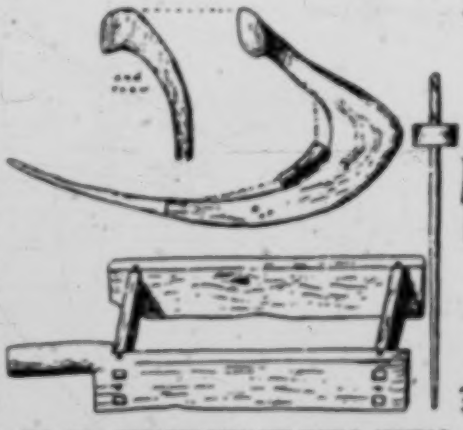

FIG. 173. TWELFTH-DYNASTY SICKLE, SPINDLE, AND BRICK-MOULD
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, Pl. IX.

Sheep-dung, which is still commonly used as fuel in Egypt, was similarly employed anciently, certainly during the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and so, too, probably was cow-dung. Herodotus

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 60a, 63; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 173, Fig. 31; Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
[2] See also W. Wreszinski, *Bericht über die photograph. Expedition* (Halle a. S., 1927), Pl. 13, B.
[3] See T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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may have been referring to the way in which cow-dung is made into cakes for fuel (p. 154) when he says:[1] "They take up dung with their hands."

FA 085

Baskets of the same shape and same technique as the *maḳṭaf* (p. 156, Fig. 83) were made anciently, as can be seen from the photograph of such a basket found at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 174), and dating therefore from the Eighteenth Dynasty. Such baskets are constantly depicted in reliefs and paintings from the Third Dynasty onward, often as being carried, as at the present day, on the heads of the women.[2] Baskets of much the same shape and of the same technique as the Eighteenth-Dynasty baskets shown in Fig. 175 are woven at the present day (p. 159)—*i.e.*, they are made of palm-leaf with a foundation of split midribs and built up spirally with over-sewing.[3] In el-'Amarneh was found a basket tray[4] that is almost an exact replica of that depicted in Fig. 89, p. 161, while the two baskets, the one ancient and the other modern, shown together (Fig. 176) are also practically identical.

A [172]

FIG. 174. ANCIENT MAKṬAF
After T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, Pl. XXI, 4.

The *ḳafaṣ* (p. 160) was as much employed anciently as it is now, and is frequently shown in the ancient reliefs and paintings.[5] A bed made like a *ḳafaṣ*, and somewhat similar to that mentioned on p. 161, may be depicted in the Third-Dynasty tomb-chapel of Ḥesy.[6]

A [352]

Palm-fibre rope like that in use at the present day (see p. 161 and Frontispiece) has been found in tombs of all periods.[7]

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[1] ii, 36.
[2] See above, p. 299, and *cf.* p. 37, Fig. 14, p. 80, Fig. 38.
[3] See also W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 1.
[4] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXI, 3.
[5] *E.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bershek* (London, 1893), Part I, Pl. XXII.
[6] W. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1911–12: The Tomb of Hesy* (Cairo, 1913), p. 29 and Pl. XIX.
[7] See, *e.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), p. 33 and Pl. XXXIV.

A [113]

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by 248
raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to 461
empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then 464
resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere [144] of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or [372] cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering 243
about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 343] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (").

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (").

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) ("), both of

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331
that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 342
The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare 342
by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 341
The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the [137] Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [513] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanfish, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

656 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
731 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

353 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zariba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoosa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [378 354 415] [296 515]

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
714 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *bullas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
857 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics.
593 But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet
[292] cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole
[292] of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[302] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven [346] from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, [197] the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

[349] [137]

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted [373] lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 233–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Aysha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *tafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are

[291]

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman [531] artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The [386] paint, which is made of a material called *mughreh* (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freehand, and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work from.

The pots are now ready for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready for them, but they can be put on one side for a short time without any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (41).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [766]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

33.

×539 805 461 [422] [405] For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli ma'akum is-sā'āt,
ādi mī'ād 'afa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 461 To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self, in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, 'afa-lla, nāna!
we-bfilna wei-ḥuṛī 'ammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

8:Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

45.

×539 As in the preceding song, the person addressed, is the caravan-driver.

Istanne telat daragat,
lazuma awadda' rufa'ati
wa'ul-luhum:
'azzam Allah agrukum fiye!

Wait three degrees,
That I may take leave of my companions
And say to them:
[572] "May Allah bless you richly for all that ye have done for me!"

1. Three degrees on the primitive sun-dial, which is made [405] [805] by thrusting a stick into the ground. According to it, the periods of work at the shādūf are regulated.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

42.

The Inventor of the Shādûf.

539^
406●
312
[174]

Shādûf is the modern name for a very ancient contrivance for raising water from the river to the higher level of the fields. There is evidence of its existence in Egypt as early as 1500 B. C. It resembles our well-sweep. Tied to the longer end of the lever by a rope, usually of plaited palm-fibre, is a leather pail, while the shorter end is weighted by a large stone or a lump of dry, Nile mud. The pail is filled in the river by the laborer and then emptied into a trench in the field above. (Compare the illustration.) If the banks are high, two or more shādûfs are employed, ranged in tiers, one above the other.

Of course the name of the inventor, Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi is mere invention; just as names are frequently inserted at pleasure, in such songs.

Šawādif
we-ḥbalha lif
wedlauha-glūd ma'zê gudādī.
We-aẓlo mā ṭalla' eš-šawādif
el-marḥūm Ṣālih Zabādi.

Shādûfs,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails of goat-skins.
And it was in ancient times, that shādûfs were invented
By the blessed Ṣâliḥ Zabâdi

[P. 42 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

312
●406
291

A Shādûf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

97.

Good Friends.

539x
406 ●

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel [231] and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned [312] round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers.

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether 883 the girls of the village have already been there to get water 539x as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him [312] and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how [462] even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song.

Ya sa'ye, yammů ṭāra,
waradet 'alēki-l-'adāra?
Waradet alēye ummů mandīl
wil-ka'b zēi el-ḥiyāre.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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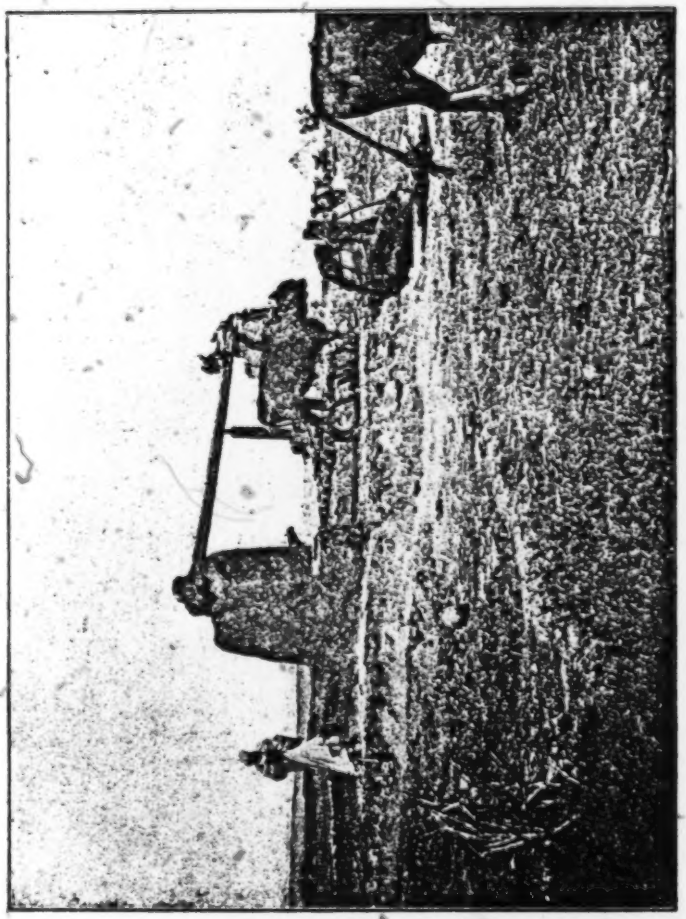
291



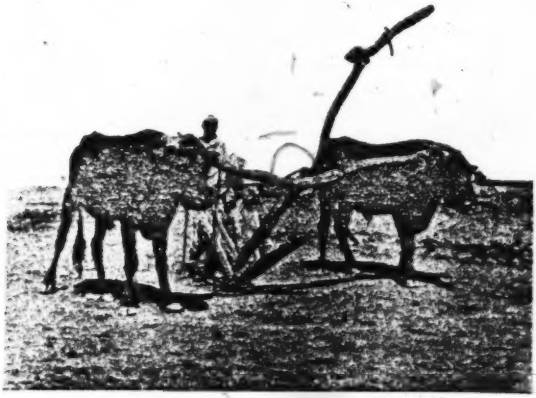
Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Sāqye Near the Great Pyramids.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.



[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] [134]

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [948] [965]

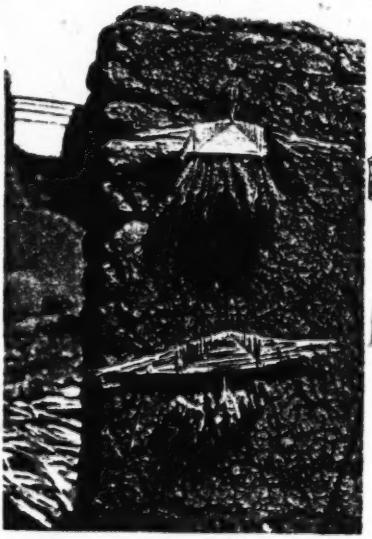


FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

243 431 264 789

threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231] [492]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[407] [291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

789 780 776

around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 794 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 241 423

and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-ʿAmarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht*.[2]

FA [285] [172]

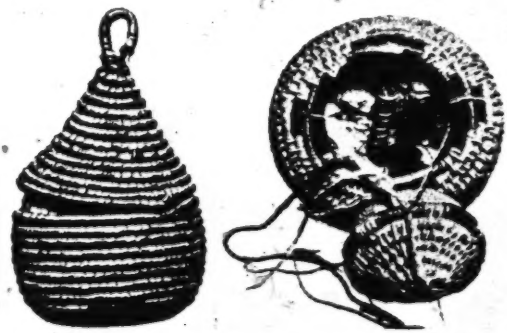


FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET
The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

FA 407

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *ṭūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A [286] [532]

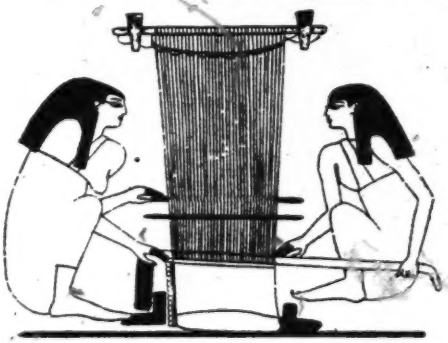


FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 27A.

G [407]

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[492] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

and allow it to germinate before the top layer dries. This 407
plough is also appropriate when as a result of a limited water 241
supply the task is to prevent a premature drying-out of the soil. None of the imported ploughs tested hitherto has proved genuinely superior to the local plough, when mechanical, agricultural and economic factors are taken into account.'

The Egyptian plough is the resultant of two interacting factors, the nature of the soil and the means of the fellah (it costs no more than P.T. 100). Its mechanism is so simple that it does not have the effect of dispensing with the ploughman's effort or of putting a distance between him and his furrow; so contact between man and soil remains close.

To level down the tops of the furrows and break up the clods of earth the fellah uses a *zahhâfa*. This is nothing but a rough beam of wood, or the trunk of a palm tree, about twelve feet long, on which the fellah stands while it is pulled by a pair of draught-animals. This very primitive instrument thus acts both as roller and harrow, and is sometimes used also to cover in the seed sown by hand. The *zahhâfa* is used after ploughing, and about four feddans can be treated in a day.

To level the land, which since it is artificially irrigated must be as even as possible, the fellah uses his *kassâbia*, a sort of coffer weighing about 120 lbs and costing about [435]
75 piastres. It has two sides, is open along the front, and is held by two handles, which the fellah raises in order to scrape off the mounds and fill up the hollows with the earth thus picked up.

The *gamoossa* and the donkey have often been mentioned, 231
and will continue to be, for they are the two chief aids of the fellah, and are well adapted both to his needs and to Egyptian conditions.

The *gamoossa*, the poor man's cow, is a mud-coloured buffalo, stronger than the ox, and extremely resistant to disease. It must have more fodder than any other draught animal. On account of its great usefulness the fellah takes more care of it than he does of himself, which is not saying much.

If properly fed, the *gamoossa* gives more milk than any cow in Egypt. In winter and spring it needs to graze

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger;

7: Riad MR13 Fellahin MR13

407

/For information on types of Egyptian plows and their evolution see category 116, pp. 241-268, 272-277 and 8 end plates./

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody figh[illegible] Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the [illegible]bat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

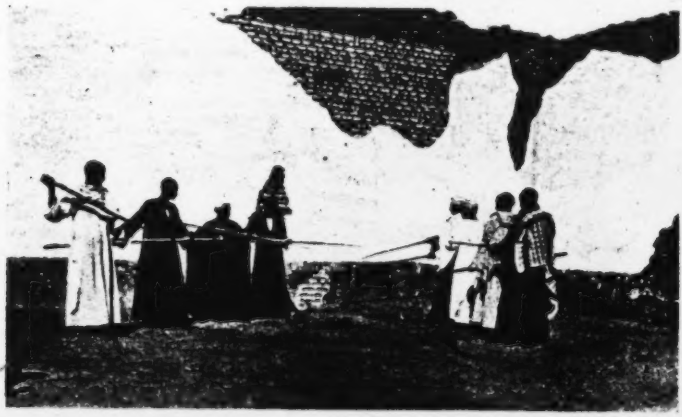


FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

[627] [682] One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced [177] into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still [411] continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

[507]

FIG. 50. CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

[411] nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an '*omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an '*omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

516
142
302
291
411
115

Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-ʿÎtr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbûḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the adventures of renowned Arab heroes. [173]

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbûḥ, ya 'Abbûḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbûḥ,
wummo warâ bitnûḥ,
wit'ûl: ya waladi,
5 *ya lâbis cz-zaradî,*
sikkinetak ḫûṣa
fil-arḍē marṣûṣa,
ma raṣṣēhâš illâni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
5 O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: .... madfûse, ma raṣṣēhâš illâni, hence I translate: "bury".

[P. 68 is blank]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut [155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

• [412]

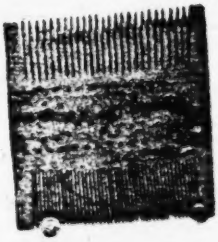


FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 832 302 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 589 302 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

789
782
776

[892]
[231]
[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

782
776
174

[412]
[291]
[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

M

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

● 412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoos-sa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread(43).

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper
252 one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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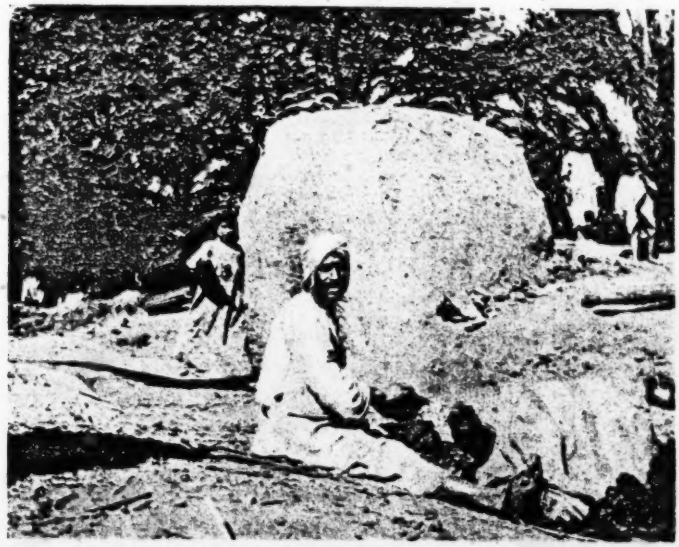
drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323
thick sides.

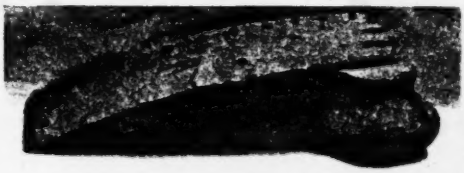
Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the



[291]
[140]
[516]

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

[291]
[413]
[137]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 When it is ready for use each potter takes a quantity from this
415 store, and places it in his hut, covering it, as usual, with sacking.
317 A large lump of clay, worked up into a thick bolster shape, is taken and placed on the round table above the wheel. From this quantity of clay a number of *ḳulal* are made, each one, on completion, being cut off from the mass of clay by a string attached to a short stick (Fig. 80).

FIG. 79. TWO TYPES OF ḲULLEH OR WATER-BOTTLE

323 The potter begins by hollow-
413 ing out the upper portion of the
415 clay with his thumb, turning the wheel with his foot all the time, and slowly drawing up the sides of the vessel, which at the first stage resembles a bowl with thick sides. Then this is gradually shaped into a slender vessel by drawing up the sides, which, of course, become much thinner, until the *ḳulleh* is formed. The grooving

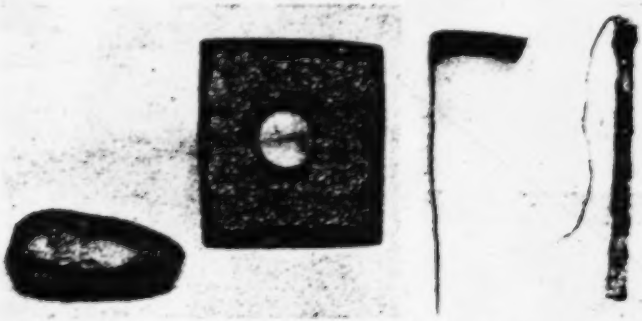

FIG. 80. POLISHING STONE, SĀDIF, GARŪT, AND STRING FOR CUTTING OFF FINISHED POTS

and final shaping is done with the aid of an implement called a *sādif*, a small, thin square of iron perforated in the centre (Fig. 80). The *sādif* is also used for incising the simple designs to be seen on the *ḳulal* made in this locality. The *ḳulleh* is then, as
323 stated above, cut off by a string. The *ḳulal* are sun-baked for one day, then put into the oven, the fire being kept alight for four

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR.3 Fellahin MR13

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLOUGH

Though the aforementioned plough types differ among themselves 407 *
yet there are some basic characteristics which combine them all. This being explained by the fact that they all labour in nearly the same physical conditions, hence the basic requirements must be similar. In the following lines we will try to describe these basic similarities, leaving aside for the moment their points of differentiations.

1. The Base. This is the 'foot' of the plough and is composed of a wooden body with a rear butt end and a tapering fore end. Its total length attains some 110 cms. a breast breadth of about 20 cms. and a thickness of about 15 cms. at the butt end. The thickness decreases towards the sharp end of the base owing to the fact that the upper surface is chiselled downwards from the butt end to the sharp point. The base supports the share, the handles, and the beam, and all these are fixed in different manners which will be described below with the exception of the share which is universally fixed to the fore end by a nail [414] in all types.

2. The Share. This being an iron blade which takes the form of a spear head and a neck. It also varies in size according to the kind of plough and soil. The standard share, usually called el Lisan 'Asfura meaning the tongue of a sparrow – has the following dimensions: total length 45 cms, length of neck 15 cms, breadth of neck 11 cms, wings at broadest 15 cms. The share is fixed on the upper surface of the tappering end of the base by means of a screw or a strong nail, and [414] the share point must protrude some five centimeters ahead of the base point. A garden plough has a smaller share in what concerns the total length: this being only about 30 cms, while that of the plough intended to work on light soils or sandy areas has the same dimensions as the standard share except the breadth of the neck reaches 14 cms, and the breadth of the wings attains some 20 cms. Consequently the garden share is lighter than the standard share while that of the sandy areas is the heaviest of all.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

*407 2. The Handles.—There are four types of handles; the split handle in type I, the single handle in types II, III, VI, and VII, the double straight handles of type IV, and the double curved handles of type V. The method of fastening the handles to the base differ in each case. The [414] handles of type I are attached to the base by means of a strong nail to each side. The same method is also applied to type IV. Of the single handle we have already spoken: it is inserted in a socket near the rear end of the base. Concerning type V the arms of the handle are fixed to the sides of the base by means of two iron bands which encircle both arms and the body of the base. Nails are not used in this case, and to make a solid and compact unit of both handles and base in this type [414] wooden pegs are inserted between the two iron bands and the upper surface of the base to tighten the attachment of both components.

There are also some differences as to the angle at which the handles are put to the base and consequently to the share. In the single handle of types II, III, VI, and VII, and in the case of the double handled type IV the angle is nearly a right one. Split handles of type I has an angle of about 100 to 110 degrees, while the angle reaches 120 degrees in type V. It goes without saying that the retreating handles of both types I and V gives the ploughman more ability to manouver the plough from behind and increases his weight or force on the handles and on the plough to regulate the depth of ploughing. The single handled plough may appear at first glance to be technically deficient in this respect: but the structure of such a plough especially that belonging to type II allow for this deficiency by means of a fairly heavy beam which—being curved—is centrally situated on the base, thus giving the plough a more balanced situation which is lacking to a certain extent in types III, VI and VII. In these types there is still some balance as to the pressure of the plough owing to the fact that the beam, though straight, rests on the base at a distance more centrally situated than that of types I and V where we find the end of the beam resting on the rear end of the base. In type IV the handles are but little retreating while the beam rests on the of the base.

3. The Grip.—The form of the grip in all these types fall in two categories, the transversal grip of the double handled ploughs belonging

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

*407 a plough. The beam of that type is fixed to the base by means of an iron band which encircles the base from underneath while its arms are fixed by nails to the beam. The iron band in this type and likewise in type III and VII is placed comparatively nearer to the middle of the base than to its rear. This being the case because in all these types the beam ends with a cavity in which the single handle of the plough is adjusted, thus the beam does not reach the rear end of the base, and simultaneously this special form of the beam end serves as a support or gives more strength to the way the handle is mounted on the base. In types I and V we find the iron band which fixes the beam to the base is placed on the rear of the base because the beam end penetrate between the split handles of type I and the double handles of type V. The beam of type IV also penetrates between the double handles of the plough, but it is fixed
• [414] to the base by means of a strong nail or a screw. The curved beam of type II is fixed directly to the base by inserting its end in the special socket bored in the base. To strengthen such an attachment a small peg is drawn in the socket behind the inserted part of the beam.

In type II it is very rare to find a tree branch or a piece of wood which can be carved to make the desired curve and still accomplishes the desired length of the beam. It became obligatory that an extension should be attached to the beam, and that is the cause that plough types of this kind are some times called « Mehrat be waṣl » meaning a plough with an extension.

The beam extensions which we observe in types IV and V are also obligatory from the technical point of view. As the pin of these two types (iron pin in type IV and a wooden pin in type V) does not regulate the angle of the plough, but serve only to keep the beam from jumping upwards, it became necessary that another device must be made to regulate the plough angle. This is accomplished by the beam extension which is commenly an upward curved piece of wood fixed at its lower
[414] end to the end of the beam by a wooden peg. The higher end of the extension is bored at different levels and by inserting a peg to which he rope connecting the plough to the yoke is fixed, the ploughman can change the angle of ploughing by puting the peg in a higher or a

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet. 302

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes. [278] [415] [755]

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache! 784 853 302 753

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them. 291 515 [754]

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads. 291 [462]

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 291 301 554

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
774 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[415]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 779
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 779
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the
" people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787]
the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, " Why did you hit me ? Did you not want me to eat ? " She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [915] ●
anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312]
jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said
they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair [761]
continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, " The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 462 to three inches thick. Another woman takes one of these cakes and places it on an upturned pot with rounded base which stands in a shallow pan filled with chaff. The upturned pot can be turned round and round in the pan at the will of the potter. The cake of clay is moulded over the base of the upturned pot, and the potter pats and smooths it into shape with one hand and with a potsherd held in the other hand. When this part of the process is completed she removes the clay, now formed into a hemispherical shape, and places it on the ground beside her. She goes on dealing

[415]

FIG. 60. SMOOTHING OVER THE JOIN IN POT-MAKING

with the cakes of clay in this way until she has a number of such shapes prepared. She then takes two of these, and bends the edges of both inward, moistening them, as she does so, with water from a bowl placed near her. The two shapes are now put together, rim to rim, the woman again moistening her hand with water to effect the join, which she first smooths over with her hand and then with a potsherd or a curved piece of wood[1] (Fig. 60).

The vessel is now a perfect sphere. The opening is cut with the woman's thumbnail (Fig. 61). She keeps her hand steady with the thumb in position, and turns the pot round rapidly as it rests on the ground, or in the pan, thus making a perfectly circular

[1] See below, p. 141, footnote.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration. 323 462

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel. 323 [291] [142] [415]

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water, 323 415

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

323 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large
415 lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later.
323 He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage, which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

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FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 Smaller vessels, such as the *ḳulleh* (see below, Fig. 79), are also made on the wheel, these being formed out of a single lump of clay. The potter, from long experience, knows exactly how large the lump must be for the formation of each vessel.

323 415 Near another village in Asyūṭ Province I saw the three following processes employed in the manufacture of a single pot. The vessels being made were large and globular in shape, and three people, a

[415]

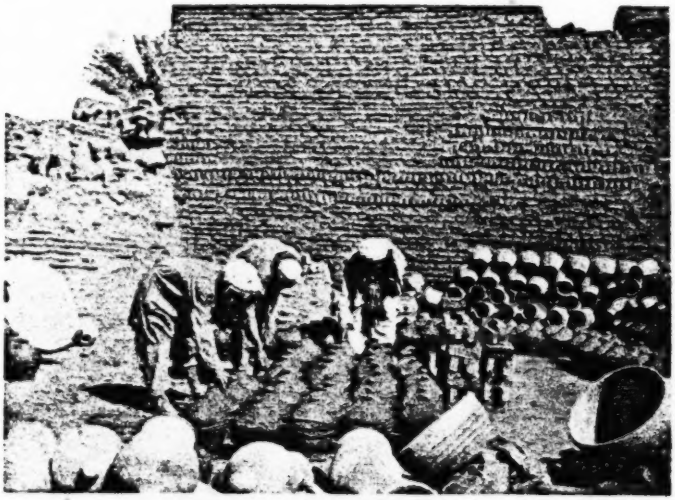

FIG. 64. REMOVING THE CORDS FROM THE POTS BEFORE PLACING THEM IN THE OVEN

woman and two men, were each responsible for one process, besides a fourth person, a man, who prepared and kneaded the clay. The clay was obtained in the neighbourhood, and chaff only was mixed with it. There was a kiln near by for the firing of the vessels (Fig. 65).

323 The first part of the pot was made by the woman. She took a large lump of clay, placed it in a round, shallow hollow in the ground, previously prepared and made very smooth, and then pounded the clay into the shape of this mould by means of an object, rather like a cottage loaf in appearance (Fig. 66), made of hard baked clay. By this means the base of the pot was constructed. She then took a potsherd, and with it and the other hand

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a 303
hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. 563
A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

[137] [141] [142] [415]

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement [413] made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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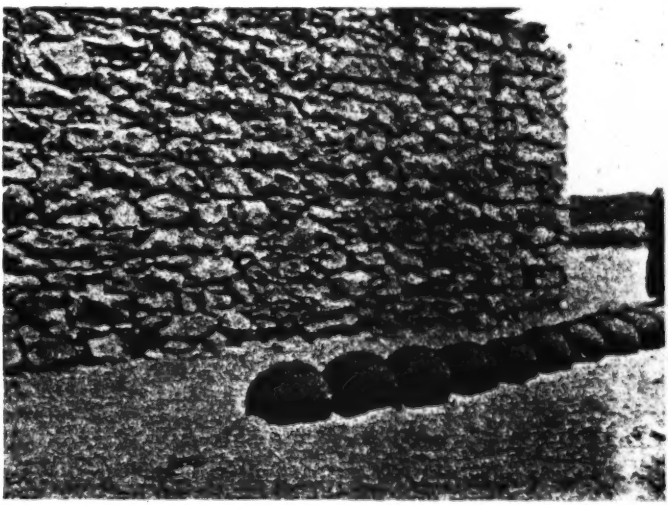
Upper Egypt

should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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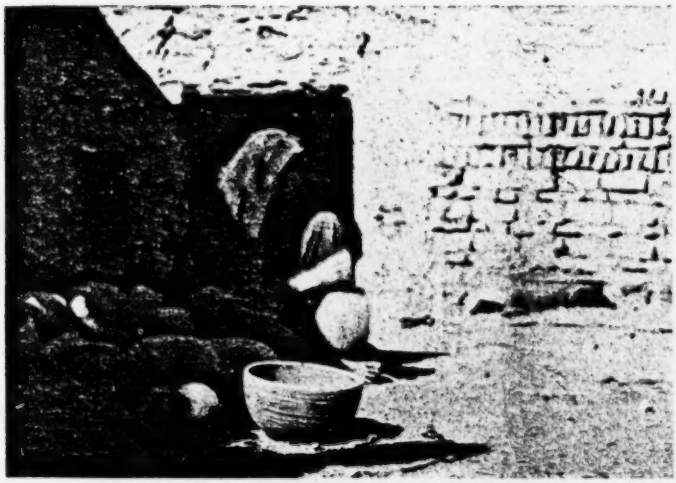

FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

[page 147]

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which
372 is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531]
[291]
[415]
[516]

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

The custom of binding the cord just below the rims of the larger pans may have been also practised in former times when making the upper part of a *zīr*. As I stated earlier in the chapter, the potter usually makes incised marks with his thumbnail just below the rim of a *zīr*, the marks roughly resembling those made by the impress of the cord. This impress may have suggested a pattern, which the conservative mind of the potter demanded should always appear on that portion of the pot, even when the cord was no longer wound round it. Thus the marks made round the base of the rim by the thumbnail may be an imitation of somewhat similar markings left by a cord bound round this part of the *zīr* in earlier times.

FIG. 78. PANS BOUND WITH CORDS DRYING IN THE SUN

Smaller vessels, such as *ḳulal* (singular *ḳulleh*) (Fig. 79), are also made at this factory, and the clay used is obtained from Begīg, or Abgīg, as this village is sometimes called. *Ṭafl* (yellow clay) brought from Kīmān Fāris is mixed with the ordinary clay, the proper proportions being two-thirds ordinary clay to one-third *ṭafl*. These two materials are laid in water to soak till they are quite soft. They are then removed to a deep cavity dug in the ground, where a man kneads them with his feet. The mixture is taken out and piled in a heap, so that the superfluous moisture may evaporate.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 When it is ready for use each potter takes a quantity from this
415 store, and places it in his hut, covering it, as usual, with sacking.
317 A large lump of clay, worked up into a thick bolster shape, is taken and placed on the round table above the wheel. From this quantity of clay a number of *ḳulal* are made, each one, on completion, being cut off from the mass of clay by a string attached to a short stick (Fig. 80).

FIG. 79. TWO TYPES OF ḲULLEH OR WATER-BOTTLE

The potter begins by hollowing out the upper portion of the
323 clay with his thumb, turning the wheel with his foot all the time,
413 and slowly drawing up the sides of the vessel, which at the first stage
415 resembles a bowl with thick sides. Then this is gradually shaped into a slender vessel by drawing up the sides, which, of course, become much thinner, until the *ḳulleh* is formed. The grooving

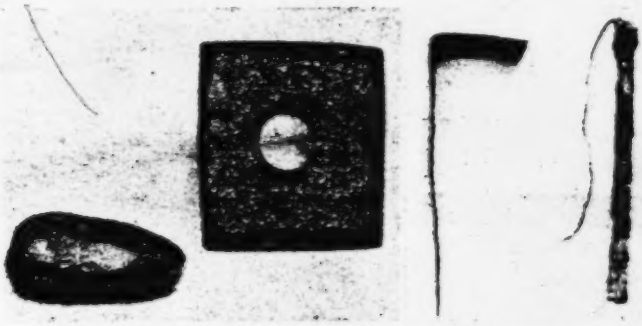

FIG. 80. POLISHING STONE, SĀDIF, GARŪT, AND STRING FOR CUTTING OFF FINISHED POTS

and final shaping is done with the aid of an implement called a *sādif*, a small, thin square of iron perforated in the centre (Fig. 80). The *sādif* is also used for incising the simple designs to be seen on the *ḳulal* made in this locality. The *ḳulleh* is then, as stated above, cut off by a string. The *ḳulal* are sun-baked for
323 one day, then put into the oven, the fire being kept alight for four

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [179]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

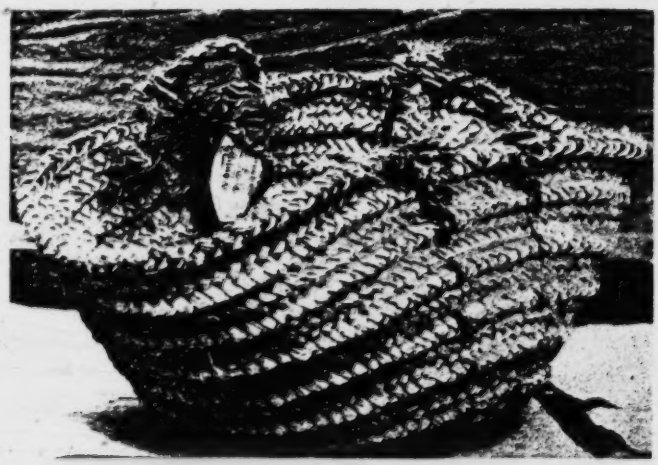

FIG. 83. A MAḲṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Egyptian Oases MR12

F 285

same material, any ends that remain over being laced into the sides of the basket below either handle. The base of the basket on the outside is also sometimes reinforced with cord coils.

E 285

I should mention that a basket in my possession, from the oasis of el-Farāfreh, displays the same technique as the *maḳṭaf*. It is of very fine workmanship and the plaits are very small.

F 285 415 [460]

FIG. 85. BASKET-GRANARIES

A similar technique is employed in the making of basket-granaries. These are of great size, and are made, so I was told, exclusively by men and, so far as I know, in Fayūm Province only; I have never, as yet, come across them elsewhere. Numbers of them are sold at the weekly markets, and their size may be estimated by comparison with the height of the people standing near them in the photograph (Fig. 85). I have frequently seen these basket-granaries on the roofs of houses in Fayūm. Sometimes they are quite globular in shape and are entirely covered with clay, this being done, so one of my servants told me, to keep the wind and dust from penetrating through the interstices. Only when small pieces of clay have fallen off is the original structure of basket-work revealed. All the basket-granaries that I have seen are extremely well made, and are very strong.

F 285

Many baskets in use all over Egypt are made in the follow-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 285 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

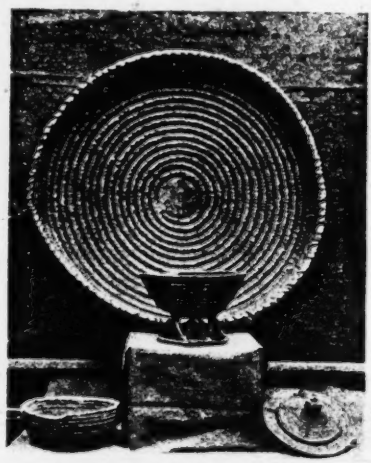
F 285 415 F [460]

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.



F 352
F 083
S [085]

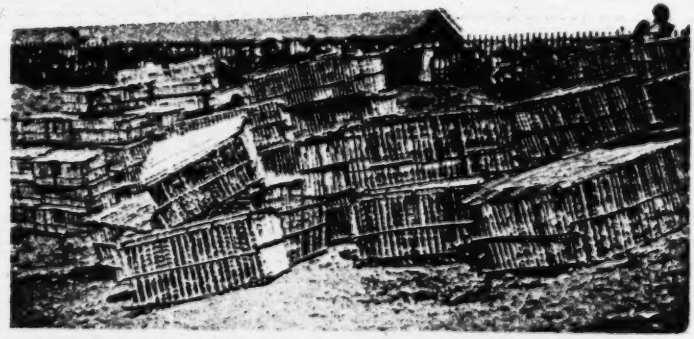
FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SĪWEH (ON RIGHT)

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *ḳafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*līf*). The *līf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 394



F [085] [417]

FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Every one who brings goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *kafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

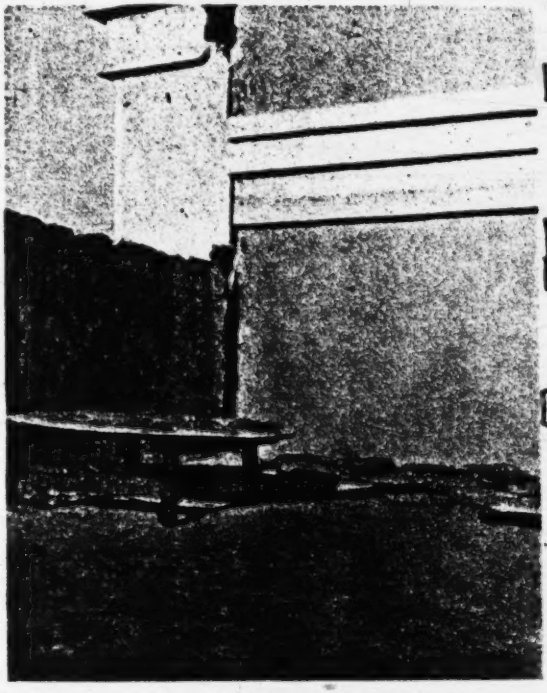


FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] [152] [283] [415]

> *Shawādīf,*
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. 243 789 978 These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

465 I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
243 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

[291]
[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
●[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515]
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [445
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415] ●

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zarîba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 378 [354 415] [296 515]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

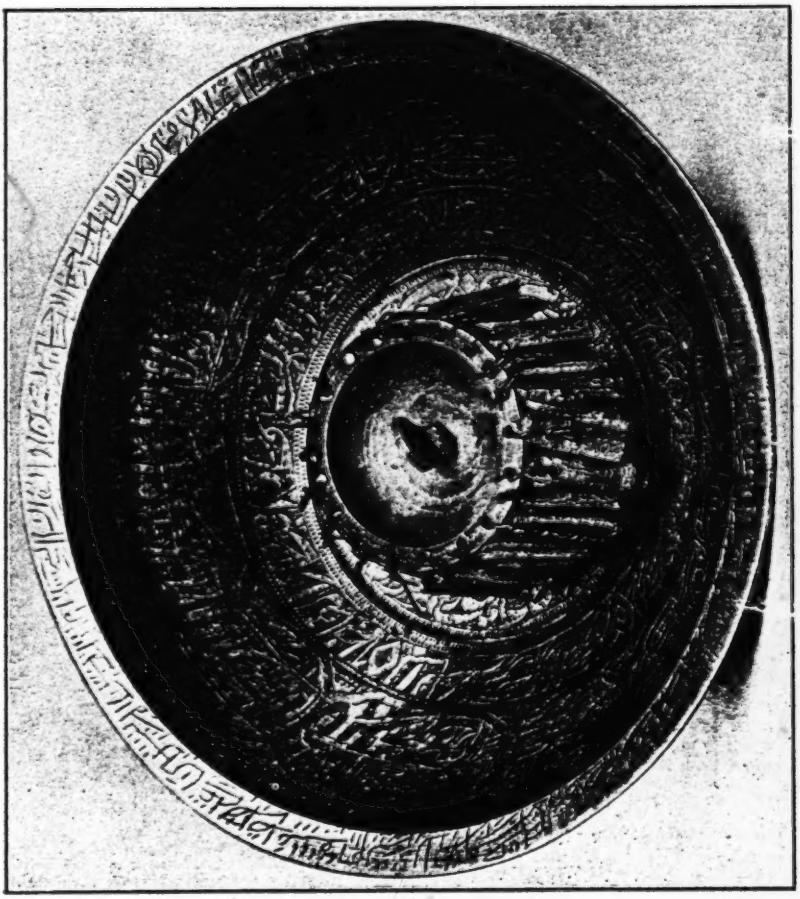
515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755
789
312
415



THE "FRAR" CUP (*Tâsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 69]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is Ghafūr (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

17.

×539 821 [551] "Rain, pour it out", that is, all the water which you can give, so that all the vessels in the house will overflow, even to the coffee-cups. Both personal names ('Abdulle and 'Abd-el-'âl) are taken, of course, only to rhyme with the names of the vessels. It is certainly mere accident, that the name 'Abdalla appears also in a similar rain-song of Dalman's (P. 175; from Aleppo).

Ya naṭaret 'Abdulle,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-'ulle.
Ya naṭaret 'Abd-el-'âl,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-fingāl.

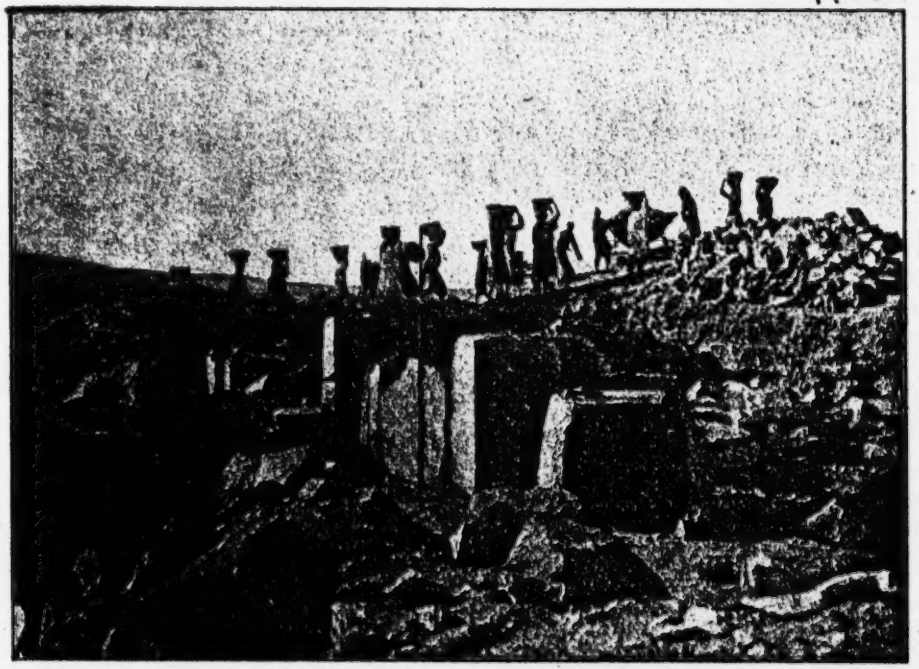
O Rain of 'Abdulle,
Pour it out and fill the water-bottle!
O Rain of 'Abd-el-'āl,
Pour it out and fill the cup.

2. 'ulle are the water-bottles, of porous, unglazed clay, in [415] which the drinking-water is kept fresh.

4. Fingāl (fingān) are the little coffee-cups without handles, which are placed in little stands (zarf) resembling egg-cups.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

172
482
415



Photograph by L. Borchardt.

At the Work of Excavation.
The Boys with their Rubbish-Baskets. (Excavations at Abuṣîr.)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

49.

×539

Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar!
Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!
La'etni gamīle betitmaḫṭar,
we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri
5 *we-nādēt, ma ḥaddē gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
5 [And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of [244] them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmûd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half [426] of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied [492] together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According [415] to Maḥmûd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

63.

Good Wishes.

×539 858 A little girl is addressed, who, according to Maḥmûd, is still so small, that she is compared with "goslings which are still green (aḫḍar)". Compare No. 64. Fortune shall so favor the little one, that she shall some day eat with a golden spoon from a silver dish.

Alla ye'ēnik, ya uzēzet Ragab;
wiṭ-ṭiśtē faḍḍa, wil-ma'ali' dahab.

Allah help thee, O Ragab's gosling!
● [415] May thy dish be of silver, the spoons of gold!

[551] 1. According to Maḥmûd, Ragab is the name of the child's father.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

415
482
291
312
142

Women Drawing Water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

539 And pile up the dove-jars and boards,
832 And pack the peaches and the apples!
Come, my beloved and caress me,
Else thou wilt stay out and leave me alone."

231 1. The bull which turns the sâqye. (Compare No. 97.)

6. The walls of the dove-houses are built of Nile mud
343 and earthen jars, so ranged on each other, that the openings
415 are toward the inside and the bottoms toward the outside. These jars furnish the holes for the nests. The bottoms of some of the jars are knocked out, in order to make entrance-holes. Boards and the ribs of palm-branches, form perches on the inside, while for the outside, branches of trees are usually stuck into the wall.

The illustration shows a half-demolished dove-house, the construction of which is thus made very clear.

These fortress-like dove-houses are to be found especially in Middle Egypt.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiychs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchich* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchich, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285 415

nails or fastenings of any kind are used. The lid is made in a similar way. I always have my kitchen utensils and stores packed in such baskets when travelling from village to village, as they have the advantage of being light in weight as well as durable.

Beds, chairs, and small tables are made of the same material and in a similar way to the *ḳafaṣ*.

Native rope is usually made out of the fibre of the palm-trunk (*līf*). The *līf* is picked over and torn into strips, which are twisted into a cord between the palms of the hands (Fig. 91 and Frontispiece). There is a large rope-making industry in Fayūm Province, and the ropes made in this village are traded over a large area.

FIG. 89. VARIOUS BASKETS: TRAY (AT BACK), FRUIT-BASKET (IN CENTRE), BASKET FROM SÎWEH (ON RIGHT)

F 352
F 083
S [285]

Strong woollen cloth is woven in a great many villages, but the weaving of finer materials, such as silk, is mostly

F 286 294

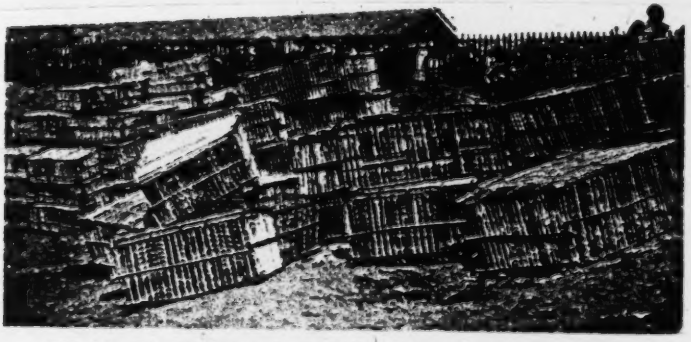


FIG. 90. BASKETS OF PALM-RIBS (AKFĀṢ) FOR SALE IN A MARKET

F [085] [417]

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the '*omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([15]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

481 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The low 000

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters. 582

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown. 583 [584] [586] 421

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle. 585 [262]

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall. [515]

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

33.

×539 805 461 [422] [405] For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli maʿakum is-saʿât,
ādi miʿâd ʿafa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 461 To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self, in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, ʿafa-lla, nāna!
we-bfilna weš-šuṛl ʿammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

small landholders. Three decades ago, the head of one family owned about thirty acres, but after his death the land was divided into smaller plots between his inheritors. At present, apart from two outside landowners who possess about sixty acres in the village, and ten other villagers who each own more than five feddans, all the rest own less than five feddans. If the total arable land, estimated at 1350 acres, were distributed among the total population of 4450 people approximately, the *per capita* share would be little less than third of an acre (seven kirats) or 0·58 crop area *per capita*, which is slightly higher than the crop area *per capita* for the whole country, i.e. 0·46.[1] Moreover, the soil of the cultivable land in the village represents the average soil in the country, judging by its taxable power, which ranges from eighty to a hundred piastres.

At this juncture, it is relevant to mention that according to the Koranic law, at the death of man or woman, his or her property is shared by all the children of the deceased. We cannot go into the various details of the intricate Moslem law of inheritance, but shall refer to some of its significant principles. A female gets a share half that of the male. The inheritance should always be awarded to the 'asaba, the patrilineal line, however distant its members may be (apart from the wife, if she lives after her husband). The law recognizes the equivalence of siblings of the same sex, and it gives no privileges to primogeniture.

During the father's life, his children, whatever their age or status, have no legal right to own any of his property.[2] Whether to divide the land each attending to his share independently, or to keep it intact and farm it co-operatively, depends on the relationship between the heirs.[3] Many factors are involved, such as the existence of half-siblings (brothers or sisters by the father only), where the possibility of division is very great, on the relations of wives and in-laws, on the father's treatment of his children while alive, and so forth. If the land as the symbol of family unity is tilled co-operatively, the married sisters then get their land produce

[1] The 'crop area' unit is used instead of the acre because of the existence of the two systems of irrigation in various parts of the country, and hence the crop area gives a more accurate estimate of the cultivable land. For the whole country it is calculated that the land yields an average of a crop and a half per acre. For the whole country the population is 19,090,000, the cultivated area per acres, 5,585,300, and crop area 8,815,900 (Census 1947).

[2] See S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*, London, 1931.

[3] The fear of division and perhaps the forgetting of one's name in the family has led some of the landowners to consecrate land, for all the members of his family of the patrilineal descent, which could not be owned separately, and should pass, as left, intact to the second generation and the third and so on. This type of land is called 'Wakf Ahli—family endowment', to differentiate it from Wakf Khairi—charitable endowment, consecrated for religious purposes and looked after by the Ministry of Charitable Endowments. The abuses in running these estates led the new regime that followed the abdication of ex-King Farouk to pass a law dissolving the charitable endowments (September 1952). According to this law these estates are to be distributed among the legal heirs as specified by the Islamic law of inheritance.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

973
656

1859 required that land in the villages be entered in the Government Land Register. This enforcement of registration resulted in many head clans, or village sheikhs (headmen) entering as much as they could of the village land as their property; in other cases, many owners had to abandon their land for fear of taxation.[1]

Moreover the great stretches of land recovered by Muhammad Ali and his successors were given over tax free to some wealthy notables and foreigners, and this group constitutes part of the big landowners in Egypt at present.[2]

[1] Alfred Bonne, *State and Economics in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] It must be noted here that after the completion of this work, the system of land ownership in Egypt has undergone radical change, a measure which was overdue for the establishment of the foundations of social justice. The abdication of ex-King Farouk and the seizure of power by the Army in July 1952 marked a new era in the life of the country. The new regime made land reform a central issue in its programme and passed the Law of Agrarian Reform. This law decreed that no landowner should possess more than 200 acres. Large estates over this size are to be expropriated with reasonable compensation for the owners. The expropriated land is to be distributed over a period of five years to landless villagers, to agricultural workers and to farmers with holdings less than five acres. For the full text of the law, see R. el-Barrawy, *The Military Coup in Egypt*, Cairo, 1952.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

252 oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning
962 in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done
[395] the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is

[286]
[291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North
252 of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually
[423] situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up
[262] through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern developments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Ḥasan and elsewhere [1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

FA 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [172]

FIG. 173. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt.[3]

FA 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

FA 241 423

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings.[6]

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.
[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 241 423

and from the excavations of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft at el-'Amarneh.[1] The shifting of the boundary-stone (pp. 169f.) is condemned in *The Teaching of Amenōphis, the Son of Kanakht*.[2]

FA [285] [172]

FIG. 176. A MODERN (LEFT) AND ANCIENT (RIGHT) BASKET

The latter after H. E. Winlock, *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, Part II (December, 1922), p. 35, Fig. 24.

FA 407

The modern plough (p. 170 and Fig. 97) is almost exactly like the ancient one (see Fig. 178).[3] For a drawing of an ancient plough reconstructed from still surviving portions see Fig. 179. Dr Borchardt thinks that the ancient like the modern plough was furnished with a metal share. Accordingly the wooden share in Fig. 179 is represented as sheathed in metal. Dr B. P. Grenfell told my brother that the blade of the *ṭūriyeh* (hoe) had acquired its present shape, and was already made of iron, by Roman times, for he had found such blades in rubbish mounds of the Roman period.

A [286] [532]

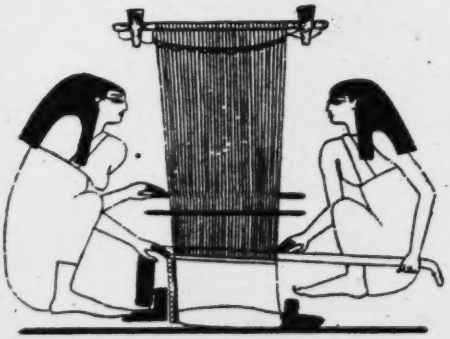


FIG. 177. TWO WOMEN WEAVING ON A HORIZONTAL LOOM

After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers*, Pl. 17A.

G [407]

The modern *shādūf* (pp. 170 f.) finds its exact counterpart in

A [113]

[1] *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, vol. l, p. 17. For a photograph showing a modern cultivated patch of ground so divided, see G. Steindorff, *Die Blütezeit des Pharaonenreichs* (Leipzig, 1926), Fig. 54.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xii, p. 204.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35; A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, translated by H. M. Tirard (London, 1894), p. 426; J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, p. 281; L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des*

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([13]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([13]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133] 241

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([14]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city 563] except through the '*omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's 443] agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. E Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great 423 landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the E separate circle of the Princes.

563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([11]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through E numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take F from them what they have to give.

421 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it 134 yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Egypt MR1

Turkish Egypt MR2

E F 423

In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*).

The State and the Land

T F 175 656 423 651 643

In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

T F 423 651 656

Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

T F 423

In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

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● 423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarcation. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name ([14]).

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The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Government already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be alle to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (''). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market. E F 423 794 429

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life. F [461]

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans. F 423

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners. E. F 423 643

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which *should take into* consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *ezba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee land lords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smalholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

423 425 426 Small properties do not result solely from the subdivision of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 425 426 556 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

656 [312] The Government, by its control of the land, and still more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

427 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken
511 from us, we will steal." ([22])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen
554 possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number
183 own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as
651 a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last
452 usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows
427 from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([23]).

423 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least,
432 owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

423
fellaheen of every other category see snatched from their 432
hands; he can sell his few *cantars* of this precious crop for his own profit.

One feddan, on which he has spent about 30 piastres for 432
seed, 100 piastres for chemical manure, and 70 piastres for 434
taxes, irrigation, and petty expenses, may bring him in L.E. 10. If he is pressed for money the fellah sells his cotton at once to the money-lending merchant in his village, who takes advantage of the seller's need, of his ignorance of market fluctuations, and of the multitude of similar offers, to buy at the lowest price. If the fellah is more intelligent, he can take his cotton to the *halaqa*, or cotton market, of the neighbouring town. There, since 1912, weights and prices have been controlled by the Government, and buyers cannot trick the sellers.

When his need of money is less imperious, the small farmer does not sell his cotton immediately it is picked. He stores it in the *shoona* of a big landowner, a bank or a cotton firm, against an advance with which he can pay his most pressing debts. Offers to purchase are made at this store in piastres per *cantar*.

Sometimes the cotton is bought in advance; that is to say on sowing, the small farmer promises to deliver to so-and-so such-and-such a quantity of a given quality. The price is fixed either at the time, or on 'contract terms'. This means that it is based on a fixed minimum with a premium depending on the market value at Alexandria on whatever day suits the seller, provided that it be within the period agreed on at the time of contract.

Yet all these precautions intended to protect the smallholder cannot prevent him from being defrauded sadly often in the sale of his cotton, owing to his ignorance and individualism. It is the same with his other crops.

The *Crédit Agricole*, for example, makes advances on wheat, though only to small farmers, until they can sell their crops at the best price. So far so good. But the village middlemen can easily persuade the *omda* to give them certificates proving that they are also cultivators. They then buy corn at P.T. 120 an ardeb from the true fellaheen, who, not knowing where else to turn for money to pay their taxes, are glad to be able to sell. At the beginning of harvest this may seem a good bargain. But an *ardeb* is 175 kg.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel-
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrizi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 578 754

113 162 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant." THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan. [423]

[453 426] 15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [212] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possesion, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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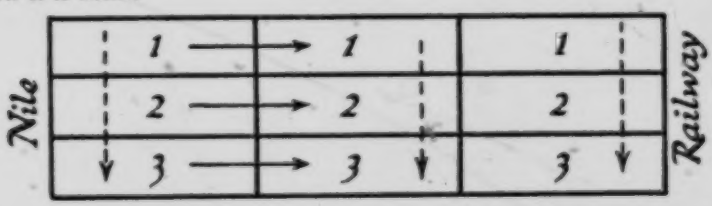
428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are [651] fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than [578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' [311] division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging [435] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imple- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

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As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 anxiety, weakening the stability that obtained in the traditional social
178 structure. My informant, Mahmoud, told me once, 'If the present people of Silwa find you writing a complaint to the Government against somebody, they will spontaneously offer their signature or their stamp without asking you about the nature of the complaint, or even against whom'. He went on to say, 'These people never learn a lesson. God sent them the malaria epidemic followed by the torrent that swept their harvest, but they never guard against God's anger, and they will go on eating each other's flesh.'

155 Such insecurity and anxiety is bound to have its repercussions upon the children as they grow up. Hearing remarks of dissatisfaction about the environment and the people in general from their elders, the children themselves feel insecure and become more suspicious.

178 To sum up, the folk life of the village has certainly undergone a certain amount of change from the point of view of what some anthropologists call the material culture, and the instruments of living. The villagers, for instance, are more familiar with pecuniary values and commercial transactions. More often than not, borrowing money at present is accompanied
[426] by writing a receipt, while hitherto this was considered to be a social disgrace. Even at present, some creditors hand over the receipt to a third person to keep it as a sign of his reluctance to accept a written bond. Like Chan Kom, however, commercialism has not entered the primary family. The writer has not heard of sisters or brothers living together doing business with each other on a commercial basis, and it is almost inconceivable of a father hiring his son, or a son his father.[1]

It is obvious that the villagers are keen to accept and imitate the
[369] material symbols of city life, and it is on the material level that the folk culture of the village has been relatively more exposed to the processes of social change. On the other hand, social structure and organization and values have not changed very much. Apart from the few unsatisfied deviants, the conceptual and social orientation of the village folk life still holds valid as the same principles that have guided conduct, behaviour, and relationships are still maintained. In this pattern of folk living, the focal point is undoubtedly religion, as it continues to be the validating force
[182] of life, explaining it, and providing people with their major intellectual and emotional satisfactions and dissatisfactions in coping with the problems of life.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress (Chan Kom Revisited)*, p. 66.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 408, 409.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

			Price in £E
Average consumption is then:			
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

			£E
Clothes	..	..	4
Tea and sugar		..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.		..	1
			£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[426] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy
[595] is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

423 425 426 Small properties do not result solely from the subdivision of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 425 426 556 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

656 [312] The Government, by its control of the land, and still more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_2$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise. 443 563 [276 424]

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes. 463 302 [516] [752 751] [304] [465]

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity 754 756 791 754

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoosa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed 453
after the last war.

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricul- 453
tural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of pro- 426
viding loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot.

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, 657
with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded 426
by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo 474
anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour.

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted 474
by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have

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474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (?). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kalâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafflr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoosa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

113 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant."
162 THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan.
[#23]

15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.
[#53 #26]

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[#23] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

113 [464 857] and even prejudicial to their health": LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

49.

x539

Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar!
Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!
La'etni gamīle betitmaḫṭar,
we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri
5 *we-nādēt, ma ḥaddē gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
5 [And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmûd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According to Maḥmûd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Every one who brings
goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held. 443 407

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). 443

Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfas* (plural of *kafas*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

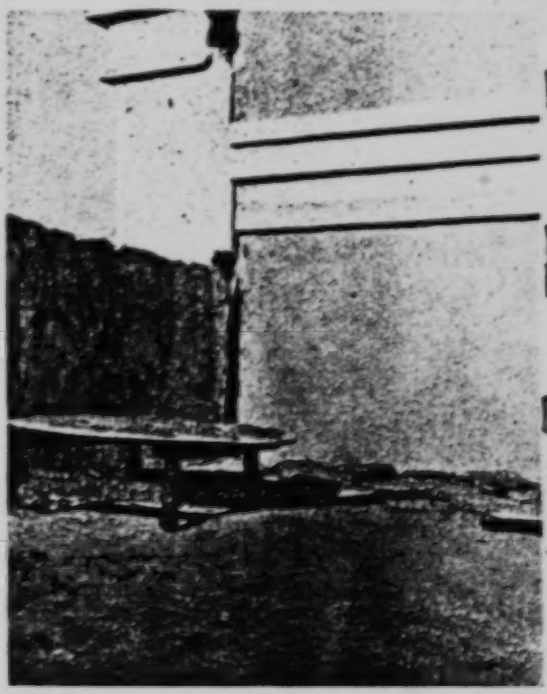

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

[415] [052] [352] [605] [463]

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be 000

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide 423
the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 241
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 312
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [578]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [685]

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which should take into consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *ezbe* except as a source of income. Like the absentee landlords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *mdayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_2$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

427 511 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken from us, we will steal." ([illegible])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 554 183 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 651 452 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 427 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([illegible]).

423 432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

574 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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small landholders. Three decades ago, the head of one family owned about thirty acres, but after his death the land was divided into smaller plots between his inheritors. At present, apart from two outside landowners who possess about sixty acres in the village, and ten other villagers who each own more than five feddans, all the rest own less than five feddans. If the total arable land, estimated at 1350 acres, were distributed among the total population of 4450 people approximately, the *per capita* share would be little less than third of an acre (seven kirats) or 0·58 crop area *per capita*, which is slightly higher than the crop area *per capita* for the whole country, i.e. 0·46.[1] Moreover, the soil of the cultivable land in the village represents the average soil in the country, judging by its taxable power, which ranges from eighty to a hundred piastres.

At this juncture, it is relevant to mention that according to the Koranic law, at the death of man or woman, his or her property is shared by all the children of the deceased. We cannot go into the various details of the intricate Moslem law of inheritance, but shall refer to some of its significant principles. A female gets a share half that of the male. The inheritance should always be awarded to the 'asaba, the patrilineal line, however distant its members may be (apart from the wife, if she lives after her husband). The law recognizes the equivalence of siblings of the same sex, and it gives no privileges to primogeniture.

During the father's life, his children, whatever their age or status, have no legal right to own any of his property.[2] Whether to divide the land each attending to his share independently, or to keep it intact and farm it co-operatively, depends on the relationship between the heirs.[3] Many factors are involved, such as the existence of half-siblings (brothers or sisters by the father only), where the possibility of division is very great, on the relations of wives and in-laws, on the father's treatment of his children while alive, and so forth. If the land as the symbol of family unity is tilled co-operatively, the married sisters then get their land produce

[1] The 'crop area' unit is used instead of the acre because of the existence of the two systems of irrigation in various parts of the country, and hence the crop area gives a more accurate estimate of the cultivable land. For the whole country it is calculated that the land yields an average of a crop and a half per acre. For the whole country the population is 19,090,000, the cultivated area per acres, 5,585,300, and crop area 8,815,900 (Census 1947).

[2] See S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*, London, 1931.

[3] The fear of division and perhaps the forgetting of one's name in the family has led some of the landowners to consecrate land, for all the members of his family of the patrilineal descent, which could not be owned separately, and should pass, as left, intact to the second generation and the third and so on. This type of land is called 'Wakf Ahli—family endowment', to differentiate it from Wakf Khairi—charitable endowment, consecrated for religious purposes and looked after by the Ministry of Charitable Endowments. The abuses in running these estates led the new regime that followed the abdication of ex-King Farouk to pass a law dissolving the charitable endowments (September 1952). According to this law these estates are to be distributed among the legal heirs as specified by the Islamic law of inheritance.

1: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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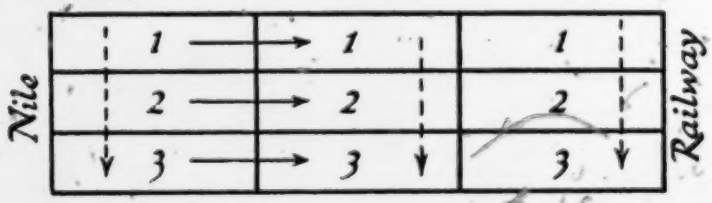
428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are
[651] fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than
[578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway
[311] station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging
[425] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *'afārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *'afrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *'afārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *'afrīteh* (feminine form of *'afrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[426] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shaban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essak Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (*). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market. E F 423 794 429

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life. F [461]

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans. F 423

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners. E F 423 643

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

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Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

64 177 Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

178 It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the 574 waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it 554 when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also [556] involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision [931] and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The [156] ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in [556] the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

176 This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the vil- 574 lagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing [369] contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and [556] the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his [931] appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

[926] there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle [788] over her body on her return.

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [176] [807]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [183]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 847 [183] [581]

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554
and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562
sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844]
ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431]
those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the
father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851]
wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one,
or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased
by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy
even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than
seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [780]
'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most
effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no
brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of
'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar-
riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584]
marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful
rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as
well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma.
Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are
taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is
brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and
this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562
arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593
is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is
always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the
one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they
get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My
informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an
occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her
father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers
are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by
sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father
as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583]
when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of
gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the
father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides
a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the
song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her
parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence
her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
431 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immedi-
602 ately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

602 Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy [867] and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

852 The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a 304 virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the [799] Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

852 Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, ● 431 especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an [118] increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

431 In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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[584] repeated by the girl's father: 'I have married my daughter X to Y accepting the payment on which the people of the two sides concerned have agreed in the manner prescribed by the Holy Book and the Way of the Prophet.' The contract was then signed by the two fathers as well as another witness for each side.[1] This was followed by the reading of the 'Fatiha' and [583] the giving of the marriage-payment (mahr) to the bride's father. In this case the amount was ten pounds paid in advance and two pounds to be paid later. According to the village practice, the payment always consists of two parts; the greater part (usually three-quarters of the total) is paid over after writing the contract and is called 'mugaddam' (in advance), [586] while the other, called 'muakhar' (the delayed), is only payable in case of divorce. All these procedures in the ceremony described here were followed, as usual, by a specially prepared meal ending with the reading of the 'Fatiha' and a prayer to God that He might help in making this marriage successful and fruitful. While all this was taking place, the girl's mother and her female relatives, but not the boy's mother or his female relatives, were singing and uttering their joy-cries now and again. The 'maazoon' then left with his money gift from the bridegroom's father and sugar and corn from the bride's family. Thus the ceremony of 'agreement' (tibah) ended.

The agreement between the two families was followed by their fixing [585] the 'night of marriage' (lailat addukhla), and this followed a fortnight later.[2] In the meanwhile, the bridegroom took his weekly presents to the ●[431] girl's house on the market day. These presents usually consist of meat, sweets, fruit and similar delicacies. The girl's mother returned the handkerchief on the basket in which these gifts were sent with presents of pigeons and flour. During his visits in this period, the boy, as expected, was not allowed to see the girl, being usually met by the mother and father. During this period also the girl's family were preparing her house and [342] decorating it. They had to build an extra room, and thus the newly-weds' apartment consisted of two rooms, one with a completely covered roof with only two small holes as windows, while the front room was half-covered. This is a typical way of building a house in Silwa, making the inner room for use in winter and the outer for summer. At the same time, the girl's family were getting together her jewellery, by buying bits and borrowing others.

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl composed of two black

[1] According to Islamic Law there must be two witnesses for each side to sanction the marriage. It must be noted here that the writing of the contract at this stage is not like an engagement; it is religiously binding as if actual marriage had taken place. If the bride or the bridegroom happens to die immediately after the contract, the surviving partner is entitled to have a share in any property.

[2] It literally means 'the night on which the bridegroom enters in unto the bride'. It must also be noted here that Moslems regard marriage as essentially a civil contract, the validity of which depends only on the agreement of both sides. See Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, London, 1914.

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The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl (composed of two black 584
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [291]
with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in 585
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their 431
contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. 585
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- 4 August 195]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

585 Behind this small gathering of men and a great crowd of children, followed the female procession crying out shrills and singing.

After the evening prayer the bridegroom offered a meal to those who [431] were in the procession, as well as others who were invited, after which contributions from men began to be received in the 'haircutting' ceremony. The details of announcement of contributions are exactly the same as those described earlier for the circumcision ceremony.* While the bridegroom or 'The Prince', as he is usually called on such an occasion, was [302] having his hair cut, the circle of 'the boys of romance'* was in full swing outside the house; other adolescent boys were engaged in mock fighting with their staves.

As the contribution ceremony ended, the crowd of boys stopped their organized playing and singing and showed signs of excitement and anticipation for the next event, when the bridegroom in his best clothes, a dagger tied to his waist and a stick in hand, had to go to meet the bride. Immediately the bridegroom came out of the house, another procession was organized. The procession was led by a strong youth taking a camel-load of wheat, corn, lentils and beans which was to be the bridegroom's provisions for three months. The bridegroom himself was amidst a group of his friends, who were reciting the traditional song of: 'O God, Praise our Prophet; our hearts love him because he will save us from Hell.' At the very rear came the procession of women, and the whole procession moved towards the bride's house.

As the singing and beating of the drums were heard by the bride's people, they came out with her, face and body covered, and in the care of her mother and the midwife, with another girl walking beside them carrying candles and corn on a tray on her head. Other women and girls were following in a state of great excitement. When the two processions met, the midwife took the bride to the bridegroom. On her face being uncovered to see him, he was prepared to sprinkle her face with some milk which he had in his mouth and would expel with force.[1] At this moment the excitement reached its peak as the boys around the bridegroom sang at the top of their voices, 'The roses are blossoming. She is rightfully thine, she is rightfully thine.'[2]

The tension between the bridegroom's maternal and paternal relations [518] reached its highest a short time later when the traditional mock fight began over the loaded camel. This fight usually takes place just in front of the bride's house, where some boys belonging to the bridegroom's family try to take the camel back to where it came from, while other boys from the bride's family try to prevent them from doing so and lead the camel to

[1] It is by no means the first time the bride and bridegroom saw each other, which might be inferred from such a ritual.

[2] It is one of the signs of a 'good man' not to show any signs of embarrassment, and to be able to aim the milk right at the bride's face, otherwise he would be chaffed about it. [518] On this occasion, although the bridegroom did this job properly, he was not spared some criticism especially from those who were in favour of a marriage with his paternal cousin.

* [See Category 116, P. 119 -- Analyst]
* [See Category 116, P. 186 -- Analyst]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḳṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [778] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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887 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree,
586 they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791
832
[291]
431
152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

584

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with [792] the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [159]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of
775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If
782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot
805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat [831] distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 789 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical. 769 735 775 292 152

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on 769 292 152

[735]

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread- 769 735 431

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769 rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who
935 appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began
again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at
431 the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in
return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets
[918] with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

769 In another part of Egypt where I have attended this cere-
775 mony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3. [2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only. The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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243 431 264 789 threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231] [492]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907] [291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

789 780 776 around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791 756 776 787

[291]

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿĪd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[764]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son
[782] recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿĪd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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241
A
[312]
[532]

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

A
[532]

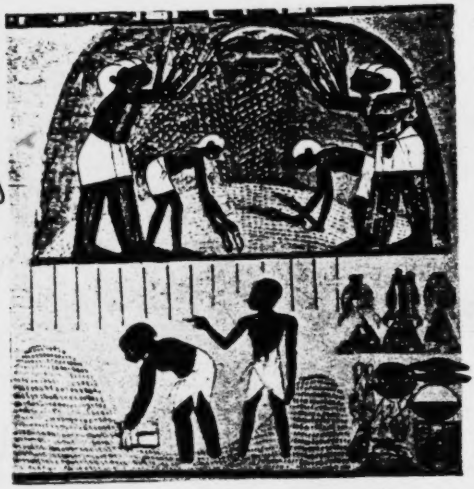

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FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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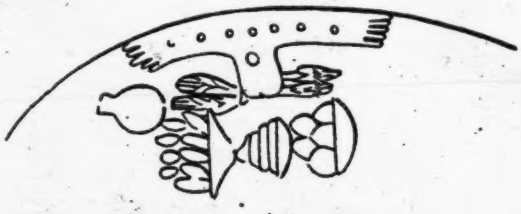
F A 431 465 241

second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]



A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥeḳat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏt*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

A F 789 782

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

A [113]

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 782 796 516 a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788 On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788 The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262 Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431 Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves ; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554 On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*". C F [532]

F 778 More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (44).

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
● 431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [294]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
846 *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorak*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

1: Ammar·E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

178 622 642 [625]

municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554]

By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilegé and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 642

The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[594] [432] [361]

[1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bàladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semàd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semàd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

427 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken
511 from us, we will steal." ([illegible])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen
554 possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number
183 own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as
651 a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last
452 usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows
427 from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([illegible]).

423
432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

423
fellaheen of every other category see snatched from their 432
hands; he can sell his few *cantars* of this precious crop for his own profit.

One feddan, on which he has spent about 30 piastres for 432
seed, 100 piastres for chemical manure, and 70 piastres for 434
taxes, irrigation, and petty expenses, may bring him in L.E. 10. If he is pressed for money the fellah sells his cotton at once to the money-lending merchant in his village, who takes advantage of the seller's need, of his ignorance of market fluctuations, and of the multitude of similar offers, to buy at the lowest price. If the fellah is more intelligent, he can take his cotton to the *halaqa*, or cotton market, of the neighbouring town. There, since 1912, weights and prices have been controlled by the Government, and buyers cannot trick the sellers.

When his need of money is less imperious, the small farmer does not sell his cotton immediately it is picked. He stores it in the *shoona* of a big landowner, a bank or a cotton firm, against an advance with which he can pay his most pressing debts. Offers to purchase are made at this store in piastres per *cantar*.

Sometimes the cotton is bought in advance; that is to say on sowing, the small farmer promises to deliver to so-and-so such-and-such a quantity of a given quality. The price is fixed either at the time, or on 'contract terms'. This means that it is based on a fixed minimum with a premium depending on the market value at Alexandria on whatever day suits the seller, provided that it be within the period agreed on at the time of contract.

Yet all these precautions intended to protect the smallholder cannot prevent him from being defrauded sadly often in the sale of his cotton, owing to his ignorance and individualism. It is the same with his other crops.

The *Crédit Agricole*, for example, makes advances on wheat, though only to small farmers, until they can sell their crops at the best price. So far so good. But the village middlemen can easily persuade the *omda* to give them certificates proving that they are also cultivators. They then buy corn at P.T. 120 an ardeb from the true fellaheen, who, not knowing where else to turn for money to pay their taxes, are glad to be able to sell. At the beginning of harvest this may seem a good bargain. But an *ardeb* is 175 kg.

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Nessim (44), the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the children. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts(44). The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

443 437 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

The market is usually held once a week and lasts from dawn to midday. The sellers, men and women, make their way to it at daybreak in long files, choose a spot to lay out their wares, and squat down behind them to wait for customers. Buyers soon appear from all the surrounding villages, and then all is a noisy, confused mêlée of men, cattle and goods.

Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 435 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

 [No.(54).- Analyst]

Provisions also have to be bought, according to need, 432
opportunity and means. Here are a few prices, the first 435
column representing pre-war prices, the second those of 1943.

	Pre-war		1943	
Meat				
Beef, per oke	P.T.	8	P.T.	20
Mutton, ,, ,, ...	,,	12	,,	30
Kerosene for lamps or stove				
18-litre tin	P.T.	10-11	P.T.	20
1 litre	7 mills.		12 mills.	
Cotton-seed oil for cooking, per oke	P.T.	6-	P.T.	10
Tea, per oke	,,	25	,,	80
Sugar, per oke	,,	3½	,,	6
Coffee, per rotl	,,	5	,,	11
Cigarettes, per box of 20	,,	2 or 3	,,	4

Farm produce is bought by the local *bourgeois* or by agents, who send it elsewhere. Prices in the village market run as follows :—

	Pre-war		1943	
Chickens, per pair	P.T.	8–15	P.T.	40
Eggs, per dozen	,,	1½– 3	,,	5
Clarified butter (*samn*), per oke	,,	12–16	,,	36
Rice, per oke	,,	2– 3	,,	3½
Lentils, per oke	,,	2– 3	,,	5

Cereals and cotton are bought up by middlemen, or 435
by agents of the big firms in Cairo and Alexandria. The 443
prices vary a good deal. A *cantar* of cotton may sell at 300-550 piastres, according to the quality of the staple, the rate of exchange, or the impatience of the fellah. The small merchant buys a *rotl* of cotton from the gleaners for 7 milliemes, and sells a *cantar* at 252 piastres. An *ardeb* of corn (about 150 kilograms) will sell for 110-140 piastres, the price varying as before with the quality and quantity. For other goods the variation is less. The prices are lower or higher according to the distance of the market from the Nile, the season of the year and the fluctuations of supply and demand. For some classes of goods the price has hardly changed for thirty years. It still sometimes happens in the villages that more than one fourth of the business is done by barter, but the use of money is becoming more and more the rule.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product		*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat	..	6	24
1 ardab of barley	..	3	3
1 ardab of beans	..	6	6
			£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product	*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs ..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year	3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year	2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres	3
Total income	£E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50
Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[23]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

423
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hands; he can sell his few *cantars* of this precious crop for his own profit.

One feddan, on which he has spent about 30 piastres for 432
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594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594 His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231 at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241 look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461 gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help' to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511 strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434 most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given) :

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

511 why the balance of the fellah's budget is so easily upset,
434 and that is why he is so often swamped by debts and interest.

454 If in any given year, by a stroke of good fortune, none
181 of these extraordinary expenses befall him, the fellah, hoarding piastre after piastre in a pot hidden in the earth, can at last see his dream come true, and buy a *gamoossa* or a few *kirats* of land. It is this alluring possibility, always just round the corner, which makes him continue year after year, like the soil and with the soil, the same unwearying work.

and allow it to germinate before the top layer dries. This 407
plough is also appropriate when as a result of a limited water 241
supply the task is to prevent a premature drying-out of the soil. None of the imported ploughs tested hitherto has proved genuinely superior to the local plough, when mechanical, agricultural and economic factors are taken into account.'

The Egyptian plough is the resultant of two interacting factors, the nature of the soil and the means of the fellah (it costs no more than P.T. 100). Its mechanism is so simple that it does not have the effect of dispensing with the ploughman's effort or of putting a distance between him and his furrow; so contact between man and soil remains close.

To level down the tops of the furrows and break up the clods of earth the fellah uses a *zahhâfa*. This is nothing but a rough beam of wood, or the trunk of a palm tree, about twelve feet long, on which the fellah stands while it is pulled by a pair of draught-animals. This very primitive instrument thus acts both as roller and harrow, and is sometimes used also to cover in the seed sown by hand. The *zahhâfa* is used after ploughing, and about four feddans can be treated in a day.

To level the land, which since it is artificially irrigated must be as even as possible, the fellah uses his *kassâbia*, a sort of coffer weighing about 120 lbs and costing about [435] ●
75 piastres. It has two sides, is open along the front, and is held by two handles, which the fellah raises in order to scrape off the mounds and fill up the hollows with the earth thus picked up.

The *gamoossa* and the donkey have often been mentioned, 231
and will continue to be, for they are the two chief aids of the fellah, and are well adapted both to his needs and to Egyptian conditions.

The *gamoossa*, the poor man's cow, is a mud-coloured buffalo, stronger than the ox, and extremely resistant to disease. It must have more fodder than any other draught animal. On account of its great usefulness the fellah takes more care of it than he does of himself, which is not saying much.

If properly fed, the *gamoossa* gives more milk than any cow in Egypt. In winter and spring it needs to graze

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bàladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semàd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semàd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Nessim (44), the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the chil-
[443] dren. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts(45). The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

443 437 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

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Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 435 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

 [No.(54).- Analyst]

Provisions also have to be bought, according to need, opportunity and means. Here are a few prices, the first column representing pre-war prices, the second those of 1943. 432 435

	Pre-war		1943	
Meat				
Beef, per oke	P.T.	8	P.T.	20
Mutton, „ „	„	12	„	30
Kerosene for lamps or stove				
18-litre tin	P.T.	10-11	P.T.	20
1 litre	7 mills.		12 mills.	
Cotton-seed oil for cooking, per oke	P.T.	6-	P.T.	10
Tea, per oke	„	25	„	80
Sugar, per oke	„	3½	„	6
Coffee, per rotl	„	5	„	11
Cigarettes, per box of 20	„	2 or 3	„	4

Farm produce is bought by the local *bourgeois* or by agents, who send it elsewhere. Prices in the village market run as follows :—

	Pre-war		1943	
Chickens, per pair	P.T.	8–15	P.T.	40
Eggs, per dozen	„	1½– 3	„	5
Clarified butter (*samn*), per oke	„	12–16	„	36
Rice, per oke	„	2– 3	„	3½
Lentils, per oke	„	2– 3	„	5

Cereals and cotton are bought up by middlemen, or by agents of the big firms in Cairo and Alexandria. The prices vary a good deal. A *cantar* of cotton may sell at 300-550 piastres, according to the quality of the staple, the rate of exchange, or the impatience of the fellah. The small merchant buys a *rotl* of cotton from the gleaners for 7 milliemes, and sells a *cantar* at 252 piastres. An *ardeb* of corn (about 150 kilograms) will sell for 110-140 piastres, the price varying as before with the quality and quantity. For other goods the variation is less. The prices are lower or higher according to the distance of the market from the Nile, the season of the year and the fluctuations of supply and demand. For some classes of goods the price has hardly changed for thirty years. It still sometimes happens in the villages that more than one fourth of the business is done by barter, but the use of money is becoming more and more the rule. 435 443

113

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [465]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-ward ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʾāš ʿalê dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukūb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled here!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 7 and No. 7, l. 2.

3. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

57.

Rallying One's Self.

539 The payment of a certain sum to the wife, which shall
583 remain her personal property, is one of the indispensable things pertaining to a legal marriage (compare the expression in No. 71, l. 1). The amount of the sum depends, naturally, upon the position and the charms of the bride. The lowest legally allowed sum, is about a dollar and a quarter (five shillings).

A pretty example of a poor peasant poking fun at himself. The dowry which he is able to command is no more than
[435] the price of a skull-cap, namely: seven and a half cents (four pence).

Yabu libde, ya fellāḥ, yāne!
wana biddi aḫod Behāne
waddīha nuṣṣ el-'abḍīye,
wel-bā'i agîb bo ṭa'iye.

O I with the felt cap, I, the peasant!
I wish to marry Behāne!
And I will give her the half of my wages,
And with the rest I will buy me a skull-cap.

291 1. Libde is the thick, closely fitting, felt cap, which the poor peasants wear. Usually it is of coarse, brown felt. Abu-libde, "father (that is: wearer) of the libde" is a frequent term of derision for a peasant.

3. Another said: nuṣṣ ed-damkiye.

4. Ṭā'iye is the white, knitted or crocheted, likewise closely fitting, little cap, which the men wear underneath the felt-cap.

59.

*539

Good Reason for Pride!

Dīnâre libiset mandīl
u-mkallafâ sittīn.
Ya 'aši', ya meskīn,
ṭarraḥūk 'al-ḫašab!

Dināre has put on a head-kerchief,
Which has cost her all of sixty (faḍḍa).
Now, poor lover,
Have thyself buried!

[551] 1. Dināre is a girl's name.

4. Literally: Mayest thou be stretched upon the wood (the bier). The girl is so proud of her cheap finery. Sixty (faḍḍa) are about one and a half piastres, equalling seven and a half cents.

[435]

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product	*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat ..	6	24
1 ardab of barley ..	3	3
1 ardab of beans ..	6	6
		£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

EGYPTIAN MONEY

E
F
436

L.E. 1 (Egyptian Pound, called "guinea") = L1. Os. 6d.
P.T. 1 = 1/100 of L.E. , a piastre, or a big piastre (Arabic *qirsh* or *qirsh sagh*) = 2½d.
P.T. 1/10 = 5 milliemes ; a small piastre, or "ta'rifa".
1 millieme = about a farthing.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MRI3
Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

x539 312 462 521

In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balālīṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
'Ašara min abu ṭa'a
we-bōse min taht el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[177] [436]

3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-ṭ-ṭibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264]

4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Nessim[44], the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the children. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts[44]. The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

443 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a 437 piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

The market is usually held once a week and lasts from dawn to midday. The sellers, men and women, make their way to it at daybreak in long files, choose a spot to lay out their wares, and squat down behind them to wait for customers. Buyers soon appear from all the surrounding villages, and then all is a noisy, confused mêlée of men, cattle and goods.

Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured 435 goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

● 437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country
571 roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the
[505 ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent.
292] When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with
494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have
[497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This
181 with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his out-
619 look in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181
In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183]
ignorance and tyranny. (")

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521
mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831
how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524
with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857]
animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684]
fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735
to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183
home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771
beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183
They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771
wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812
It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437
no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (") *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
●737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawâga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[309] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one 609 living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half [323] a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1948.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439] ●
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (11).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo([44]). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

[439 65] This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Imports have tripled in a few years. The Government has also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 27]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khi* 62
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (44), both of

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. 113 [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmim and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 285 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no

F [460]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story). 212 871

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books. [443]

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent. 204 [443] 203 207 546

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1] 871 [212]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old). [873]

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan. [874]

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school. [578] [586] [651] [734]

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

252 462 [392] oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

[286] [291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 250

Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

443 [423]

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof. [262]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Every one who brings 443
goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on 407
which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). 443

Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *kafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

[415]

[452]
[352]

[625]

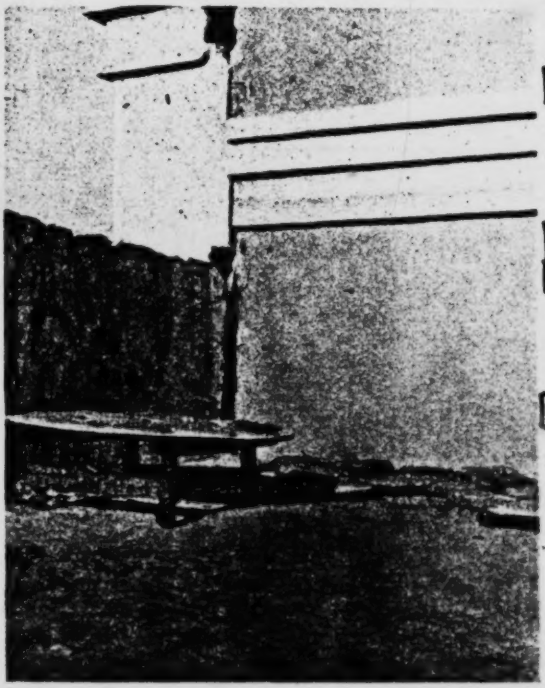

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

[463]

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be 000

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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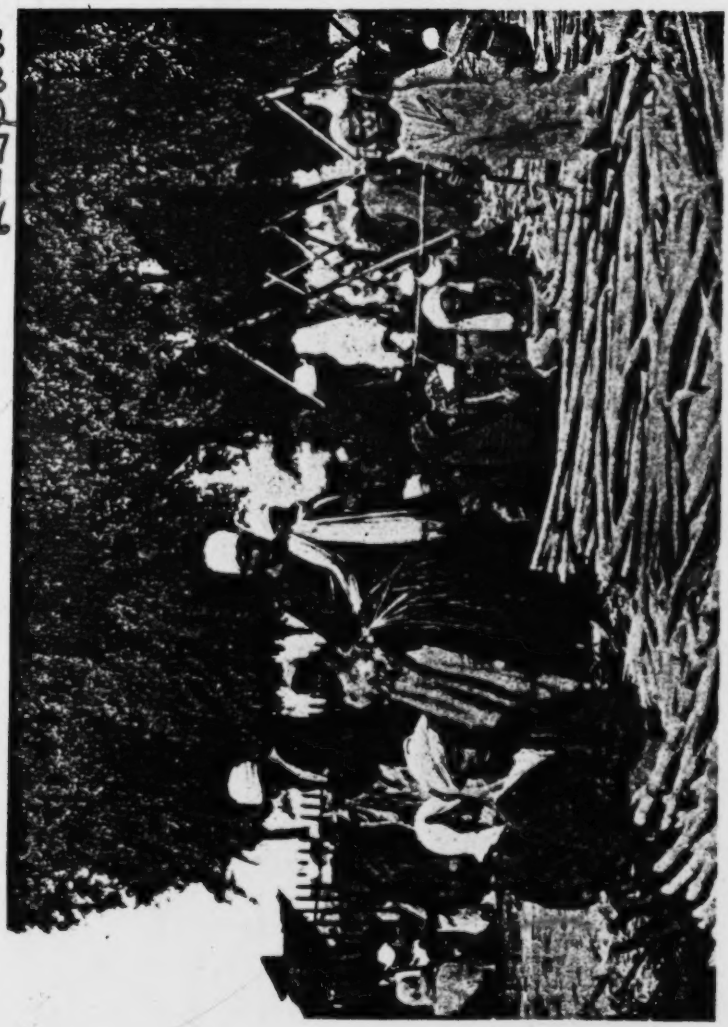

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796
769

FIG. 142. MŪLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

[page 254]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
●[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

796 When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
788 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
769 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, *as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.*

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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F C 346 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

F C [778]

F C [133]

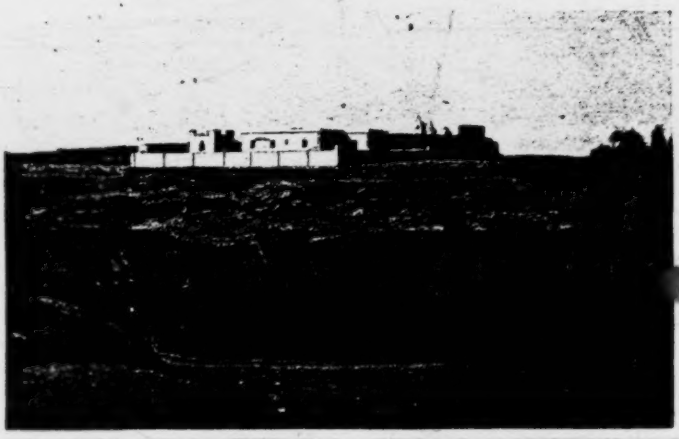

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

F C 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [443] [527]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 286

Looms like those used by modern Arab women (p. 162 and Fig. 93) are depicted in Twelfth-Dynasty paintings at Beni Ḥasan and elsewhere[1] (Fig. 177). The modern and ancient (Fig. 173) spindles are hardly to be distinguished from one another.[2]

FA 252

On p. 163 I speak of loaves being put to rise in the sun before

A [285] [174]

FIG. 175. EIGHTEENTH-DYNASTY BASKETS
After W. M. F. Petrie, *Sedment*, Part II, Pl. LV.

being baked. This seems also to have been done in ancient Egypt.[3]

FA 443

The open-air market (pp. 164 ff.) was evidently as distinctive a feature of ancient as it is of modern Egyptian life.[4] The part played by saleswomen in the markets was noticed by Herodotus,[5] and, it would seem, somewhat exaggerated.

FA 241 423

The breaking up of the fields into small squares separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches (p. 169) is an ancient practice, as we learn both from reliefs and paintings.[6]

A [113]

[1] See L. Klebs, *Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reichs*, pp. 126 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, "Heddle-Jacks of Looms" in *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.
[2] L. Klebs, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
[3] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I, p. 64.
[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 508 f. [5] ii, 35.
[6] See, *e.g.*, P. E. Newberry, *El-Bersheh*, Part I, Pl. XXVI.

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443] shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([illegible]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

421 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise. [276 424]

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Nessim[54], the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the children. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts[55]. The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

[143]

443 437 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

The market is usually held once a week and lasts from dawn to midday. The sellers, men and women, make their way to it at daybreak in long files, choose a spot to lay out their wares, and squat down behind them to wait for customers. Buyers soon appear from all the surrounding villages, and then all is a noisy, confused mêlée of men, cattle and goods.

Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 435 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

 [No.(54).- Analyst]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Provisions also have to be bought, according to need, 432
opportunity and means. Here are a few prices, the first 435
column representing pre-war prices, the second those of 1943.

Meat	Pre-war	1943
Beef, per oke..	P.T. 8	P.T. 20
Mutton, ,, ,, ...	,, 12	,, 30
Kerosene for lamps or stove		
18-litre tin	P.T. 10-11	P.T. 20
1 litre	7 mills.	12 mills.
Cotton-seed oil for cooking, per oke	P.T. 6-	P.T. 10
Tea, per oke	,, 25	,, 80
Sugar, per oke	,, 3½	,, 6
Coffee, per rotl	,, 5	,, 11
Cigarettes, per box of 20	,, 2 or 3	,, 4

Farm produce is bought by the local *bourgeois* or by agents, who send it elsewhere. Prices in the village market run as follows :—

	Pre-war	1943
Chickens, per pair	P.T. 8–15	P.T. 40
Eggs, per dozen	,, 1½– 3	,, 5
Clarified butter (*samn*), per oke	,, 12–16	,, 36
Rice, per oke	,, 2– 3	,, 3½
Lentils, per oke	,, 2– 3	,, 5

Cereals and cotton are bought up by middlemen, or 435
by agents of the big firms in Cairo and Alexandria. The 443
prices vary a good deal. A *cantar* of cotton may sell at 300-550 piastres, according to the quality of the staple, the rate of exchange, or the impatience of the fellah. The small merchant buys a *rotl* of cotton from the gleaners for 7 milliemes, and sells a *cantar* at 252 piastres. An *ardeb* of corn (about 150 kilograms) will sell for 110-140 piastres, the price varying as before with the quality and quantity. For other goods the variation is less. The prices are lower or higher according to the distance of the market from the Nile, the season of the year and the fluctuations of supply and demand. For some classes of goods the price has hardly changed for thirty years. It still sometimes happens in the villages that more than one fourth of the business is done by barter, but the use of money is becoming more and more the rule.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113

See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192]

63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171]

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443] 186

68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346]

69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191

72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

8:Schaefer A -5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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351
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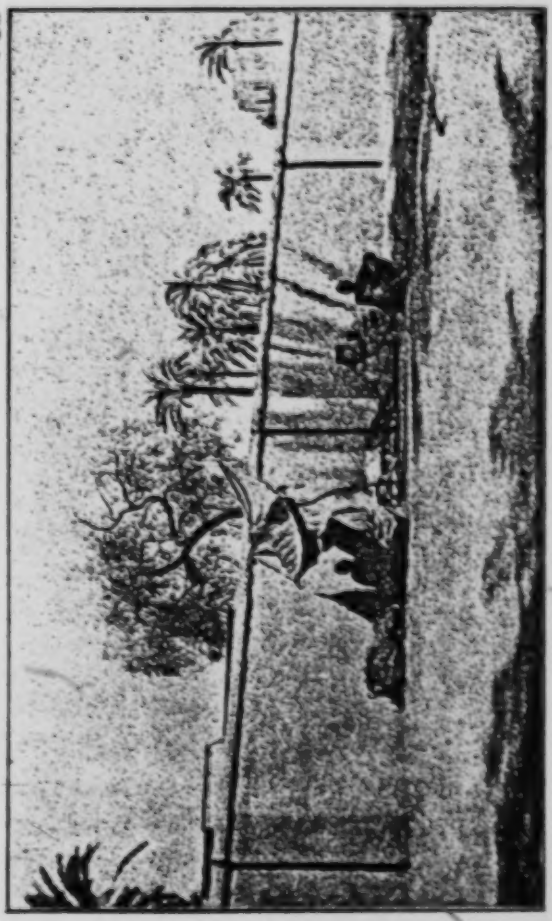

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Gisch.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion of Ramadan is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the province are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206]
moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785
has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796
proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [207]
the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] ●
cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [298]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [858]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant [568]
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [701]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nuedra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

796 [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [443] [252] [521] [526]

MANURING

Watering is not enough; the soil needs nourishment to make it productive. The fellah knows only too well that the fertilising powers of the soil must be revived. Together with his wife and children he does his best to find, at as little expense as possible, as much animal or chemical manure as he can. 241 [134]

Pigeon droppings, silt cleaned out of canals and mixed with grass, and, above all, soil impregnated with stable-dung (*sebâkh bàladi*), (but never human excrement), village débris and age-old dust, all contribute nitrogen to his field. The rubbish mounds (*koms*) of dead cities become quarries to which the fellah turns for his manure. This *sebakh kufri*, as it is called, is found in varying qualities all over Egypt; but nowadays most of what is left is of poor quality.

In the cliffs of Upper Egypt there is also a kind of sand (*marog*) and a clay (*tafla*) which serve as a poor manure, and need much labour to bring to the fields. But all these manures are lacking in salt content. The used-up soil needs artificial remedies. Despite the fellah's hidebound methods his sympathy with the soil has helped him to understand its need. Since the early years of this century, good *sebâkh kufri* having become almost unobtainable, he has begun to use chemical manures (*semàd*). Before the present war (1939), Egypt used to import more than half a million tons of natural nitrates from Chile, the earliest known source, and synthetic nitrates from Germany and England. These may be used on all except leguminous crops (berseem, fenugreek, and beans), which need phosphates. 241 242

The distribution of *semàd* is most efficiently organised by the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, which sells it by the sack on credit, and also by the Royal Agricultural Society and the big import firms. There are about 2,000 depots spread all over the country. The chief customers are the big landowners and the State Domains, which advance to the owners and tenant farmers the amount required for each holding against part of the crop. Before the war a sack of 100 kilograms, delivered to the village, used to cost from 65 to 70 piastres. Corn crops require the most expensive fertilisers, but the cheapest qualities are good enough for *berseem*. 241 242 432 435 444

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

427 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken
511 from us, we will steal." (")

The Fellah as Landowner

423 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen
554 possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number
183 own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as
651 a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last
452 usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows
427 from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are
423 like a cancer devouring the small landowner (").

432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. 641 177 The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

641 [944] 655 641 [558] [919] [453] [956] [926]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (11).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (12). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and [651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah [681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows [731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has 661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to [453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed after the last war.

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of providing loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot.

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour.

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have

113 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant."
162 THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan.
[423]

15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.
[453 426]

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

the villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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443 454 carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

349 789 531 554 The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

363 137 342 291

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

744 The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

000 A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellâḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

45A It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [89] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

115A As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

754 788 796

511 why the balance of the fellah's budget is so easily upset,
434 and that is why he is so often swamped by debts and interest.

454 If in any given year, by a stroke of good fortune, none
181 of these extraordinary expenses befall him, the fellah, hoarding piastre after piastre in a pot hidden in the earth, can at last see his dream come true, and buy a *gamoosa* or a few *kirats* of land. It is this alluring possibility, always just round the corner, which makes him continue year after year, like the soil and with the soil, the same unwearying work.

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or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water. F 823 F [842 827] F [755] F [763]

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied." C 782 823

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth. F 843 844 26

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth. F 852

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 ● 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm. 463 198

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts. 463 [461] [58] [484] 463 554 [156] [156]

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village. 554 428

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite 554 423

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellahen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [560] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1]

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible.

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3]

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertiliser he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him.

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets of the village, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are ●461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

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443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
●461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

The plough which is in common use at the present day is a primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made entirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right, and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market.

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life.

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans.

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners.

CHAPTER IV

THE FELLAH AT WORK

The preceding chapters have given a general picture /21
of the physical and social environment of the Egyptian peasantry. Thus the problem has been stated and approached. We can now attack it directly, by considering the fellah himself, first of all at the work from which he derives his name.

The Arabic word *fellàh*, which has passed into most /101
modern languages, is the intensive adjective of the verb *fàlaha*, which means to till the ground, labour or toil.

As the reader will have already observed, the fellah is /186
looked upon primarily, if not exclusively, as a 'hand' or 369
agricultural machine. As "economic man", he is equated with labour.

The work of the fellah, even more than his physical and /21
mental make-up or his habitat, is determined by the double /83
environment we have been considering. It seems in fact the mere consequence of the opportunities and limitations created by the soil and by society. His work will thus lead us to the consideration of the fellah as a human being, for it is he who in return carries on the work of the soil and adapts it to human needs. We have here a clear case of reciprocal festivals, interaction.

1. Methods of Work

The dark soil is not only productive, but also exacting /134
from one year's end to another. The fellah, who is not 461
obliged by the Koran to take a weekly day of rest, works the whole year round, and takes a holiday only at the great festivals, that is to say about ten days in a twelvemonth.

The sun shines for at least eleven hours a day, and in /132
May, June and July nearer fifteen. The fellah spends by 461
far the greater part of his time in the fields, and for some kinds of work stays there all night.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
● 461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[92] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double 312
gangs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the [805]
bank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull up the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those on the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further aside.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the 312
water reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of 461
runnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is cease- 241
lessly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller channels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—five days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen at low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order to lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through the channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles. But the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, according to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by hand. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the simplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his field, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The first way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank 241
at water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they 312
support a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and 10 ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and more or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning towards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a second movement they straighten themselves, turn to the field, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of their forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation channel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity, brings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the arms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot bear it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly [461]
two pairs work turn and turn about.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.
241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
32 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
● 461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton (29). The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen (30). Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_2$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594 His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231 at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241 look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461 gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help' to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511 strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434 most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given) :

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a 465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (40).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take ●461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, plural: fellāḥîn), made up of hard work and few pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

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it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

[1]) According to Mahmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

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kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saqqāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

1.

Morning Hymn.

539x

This little hymn was sung very often by our boys, — always [461] ● in the morning, during the first hours of work.

U-ṣabaḥna ʾaṣdīn Alla,
ʿala bābak, ya kerīm, yalla,
ʿala bāb min fatah abwābak.
Wa-la ḥaul wa-la ʾūwa illā-bak.

In the morning we turn to Allah.
At thy door (we stand), thou gracious one, Allah,
At the door of him, who hath opened thy doors of mercy.
And there is no might and no strength save in thee.

3. The Prophet Mohammed has opened to mortals the doors to Allah. [779]
4. A frequently used formula, founded on a Koran verse. [796]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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25.

×539 ● 461 [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballaṣ aḥḍar u-melān!
Ya giḏ'ān, iḏ'u rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray [192] (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē higgi, balāš dalā'a;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafā'a.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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b) Before the Noonday Recess.

27.

539x
461

Compare the remark on No. 33.

Buṣṣê fis-sâ'a,
ya-l-efendi,
til'ana kullîna gauwâ'a!

Look at thy watch,
O efendi,
Thou findest us utterly starved.

2. Compare No. 24, note on l. 1.

28.

Ya sîdi, ṛaddi katakîtak
lēmûtu wa-la ḥaddê yeṛîtak.

O sir, let thy chicklets eat their dinner,
Or they will die and none will help thee further!

1. The chicklets are, of course, the workers themselves.

[P. 30 is blank]

29.

×539 *Ṛaddūna lalla, yalli warāna!*
461 *Yib'a-lkum agr we-ṣawāb 'and Alla, yalli warāna!*

For Allah's sake, let us eat dinner, ye, who stand behind us!
Reward and recompense ye shall receive from Allah, ye, who stand behind us!

1. "Stand behind us": as overseers and drivers.

30.

Yalla, ṛaddi, wis-sams indārit
wil-maṣārîn fi-bṭunna-ḥtārit.

Up, let us eat dinner! The sun has turned itself about
And the entrails in our bellies are all stirred up.

1. The sun has risen to the zenith.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539 ×
461 ●
[264]
[262]

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes.

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'bā-l-'afa-lla!
rauwaḥ, ya mirsāl, 'dwaḍak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

---

d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Maḥmûd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min rādi
wi-t'ūl: el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

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33.

×539 805 461 [422] [405] For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli ma'akum is-sā'āt,
ādí mī'âd 'afa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 461 To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self, in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, 'afa-lla, nāna!
we-bṭilna weš-šuṛl 'ammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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•461
291

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

Excavating for papyrus.
Ehnasya in Middle-Egypt.

3*

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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35.

'afa-lla 'ad 539x
we-bṭilna we-fāt el-mi'âd! 461

Working-time is over, again,
We are "finished" and time is up!

2. Compare No. 34, note on l. 2.

36.

"It will be dark before we reach home, so call a halt!" 539x
Almost all peasants who are away from the village at nightfall, feel very uncomfortable, see No. 4, Note on l. 8. Our boy, Abu Bekr (see preface, p. VIII), once wrote me: Ellēl rūl, we-kull en-nās teḫāf minno: "The night is a witch and everybody is afraid of her". 821

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-msauwaḥna,
ya dōb es-sams terauwaḥna.

O Sir, thou who hast brought us (hither),
The sun will hardly bring us (home)!

1. That is to say: by whose command we have come to work.

37.

Compare the remark on No. 36.

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-mdādīna,
ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

O Sir, thou who treatest us kindly,
The sun will scarcely guide us (home)!

1. "Treatest .. kindly": as a nurse (dāda) would.

[P. 36 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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43.

Hard Labor.

x539
461
312

Work at the shādûf (see No. 42) at which the laborer stands up to the waist in water, unceasingly drawing the pail at the end of the lever up and down, is considered one of the hardest of tasks. The songs which they sing while thus employed, of which numbers 42—46 are examples, are usually very melancholy, both in words and melody.

Ḥakamtê, ya bēn, bi-šan'i?
baḥbaḥ el-ḥaiye!
La ummê tibki
wa-la 'amme
5 *wa-la ḥaiye.*

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps (for me),
No aunt,
5 No sister.

[776]

1. "Strangling", namely: from the hard labor. According to Maḥmûd, bēn is a designation for God.

3—5. I, poor fellow, have so little any way, and no one on earth to love me.

47.

Sympathy.

×59 35 [537] In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarim (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri māl ʿal-faṣʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: wa"af el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḫaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwāti,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
[461] And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
[609] The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
[673] 5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare [801] the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmūds.

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

[582] [605] 1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnē 'ammi = "cousin" (masc.) and bintē 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 6.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

[461] [857] [681] 9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
276 before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour
[521] free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey). 512 [782] [264]

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance. 512 513 [783] [782] [264] 512 461 [782]

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West. 461 [241]

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [574] [461] [204] 484 [188] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

512 562

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when [171]
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. Somewhat practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, where his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

[837] [264]

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

[156]

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes certain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

[462] [231]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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adjustment of the individual in his society, revealing life goals, desires, fears, tensions of living in this environment.

857* 539

In the stories in question one may discern the following three basic trends permeating them, or a combination of two or three of them in the same story. The first trend is the constant recurrence of themes of food, especially meat. If children tend to repeat mechanically the text of the tale, they certainly give wide and vivid scope to their imagination when the theme of food crops up during narration. The exclamation of 'Ya salam' is always ready to be uttered when a boy dwells expressively on a food theme in a story and thus gives other children some gratification for their fantasies about food.[1] In the tales, however, reference to situations where food is eaten, given, enjoyed, hidden, or some risk undertaken in obtaining it, is abundant. This could be correlated with other cultural data such as 'the sanctity of food', the belief that somebody might 'breathe on bread or food' and thus render it dangerous to eat, and hence the custom of covering bread on a tray of food from the eyes of a stranger, or inviting him to 'have a bite' if he comes unexpectedly.[2] One is justified in calling these themes expressions of a 'food anxiety' according to Kardiner. It is only possible for the writer here to suggest the relationship between this 'food anxiety' and some social forces, such as the low level of subsistence economy in the village, the precarious conditions of agricultural techniques in which hard work does not always reap its adequate rewards, being threatened before the introduction of perennial irrigation by Nile flooding and occasionally by torrents and uncontrollable plant pests. Consequent on all this is the fellah's rationalization of fate, with regard to life's adversities.

Secondly, in some of the stories one glimpses reflections of the nature of the Oedipus myth: in story VIII, where the child kills his stepmother (symbolizing the bad mother in the dual mother role) and then his father; in story XIII where children are drowned in the well by their father, and the one like the 'bob tail' who managed to emerge into life again and achieve union with the mother; in story XVII, where Jiha takes his revenge by killing the father of the thieves with his 'bull's tail' and gains access to the wealth of the cave (mother). In some stories there is emphasis on masculinity, e.g. in story III where the only billy-goat that survives the ordeal of the wolf (the devouring father) is the one which is aware of its masculine capacity represented by its horns, enabling it to stand up to the father. Like the symbolism in the children's games, their tales also express certain anxieties of the castration type, especially in those stories of Jiha, who is deprived of his bull, of his money and of his blanket (XV, XVI, XVII).

[1] This was quite obvious during some of the 'children's hour' I used to hold.

[2] Making food covers (waleel, pl. willat) out of palm-tree leaves is a flourishing female occupation, and practically every girl starts learning how to make them before she gets married. See also Chapter IV for the villagers' secretiveness concerning food.

[962]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

159 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the 1755 expenditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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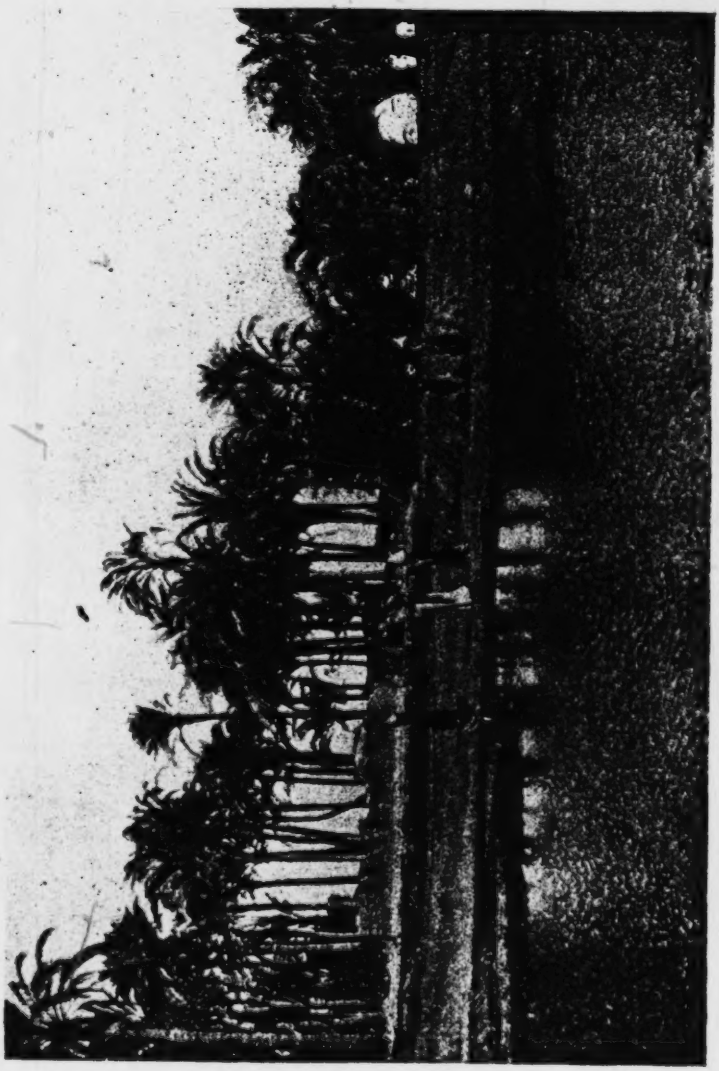

FIG. 16. WOMEN CARRYING WATER-POTS ON THEIR HEADS

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharkiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIES. THE VILLAGE MARKET

ONE of the commonest industries in Egypt is pottery-making, 323 and the methods employed are usually very simple. There are, roughly speaking, two kinds of pottery—hand-made and wheel-turned. When no wheel is employed the potters may be men or women, but the wheel is used only by men. I shall deal with this industry at some length, for, despite their importance for archæology, the methods employed by potters in modern Egypt have hitherto received little attention from archæologists. Several of these, however, have recently told me that my researches in this subject will form a valuable addition to the study of ceramic art, and will throw light on the different methods of pottery-making employed in much earlier times, not only in Egypt itself, but in other parts of the Mediterranean area also.

The processes in the manufacture of pots vary in different parts of Egypt, and I will endeavour to give as detailed a description as possible of those which I have studied in Fayūm, Minia, Asyūṭ, and Ḳena Provinces.

In one village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large pottery-making establishment in which both men and women are employed, and where hand-made as well as wheel-turned pots are manufactured. The potters carry on their art in charming surroundings, the scene of their labours being a beautiful palm-grove, the trees of which afford them a welcome shade.

The clay used for the pots is obtained in the neighbourhood, and 317 is prepared for use by a woman. It is put in a hollow in the 323 ground, and a certain amount of finely chopped chaff is mixed with 462 it, as well as sufficient water to make it of the proper consistency. One of the women then kneads this preparation with her feet until it is thoroughly mixed.

In this particular locality only women make the hand-made pots, 323 and the process is as follows. When the clay is ready for use one 462 of the potters forms portions of it into flat, round cakes, from two

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to three inches thick. Another woman takes one of these cakes and places it on an upturned pot with rounded base which stands in a shallow pan filled with chaff. The upturned pot can be turned round and round in the pan at the will of the potter. The cake of clay is moulded over the base of the upturned pot, and the potter pats and smooths it into shape with one hand and with a potsherd held in the other hand. When this part of the process is completed she removes the clay, now formed into a hemispherical shape, and places it on the ground beside her. She goes on dealing

[415]

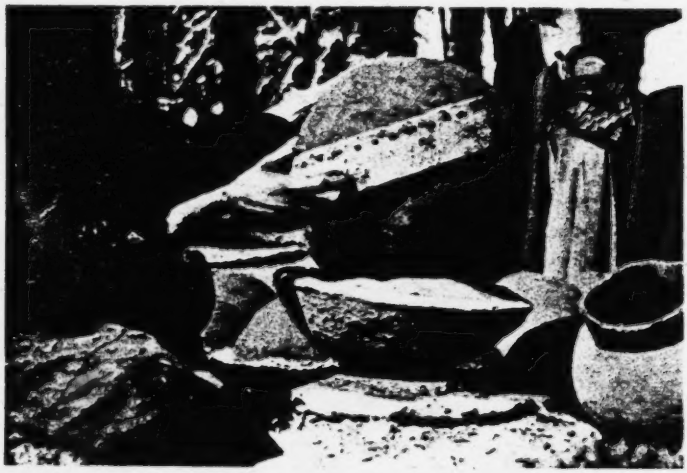

FIG. 60. SMOOTHING OVER THE JOIN IN POT-MAKING

with the cakes of clay in this way until she has a number of such shapes prepared. She then takes two of these, and bends the edges of both inward, moistening them, as she does so, with water from a bowl placed near her. The two shapes are now put together, rim to rim, the woman again moistening her hand with water to effect the join, which she first smooths over with her hand and then with a potsherd or a curved piece of wood[1] (Fig. 60).

The vessel is now a perfect sphere. The opening is cut with the woman's thumbnail (Fig. 61). She keeps her hand steady with the thumb in position, and turns the pot round rapidly as it rests on the ground, or in the pan, thus making a perfectly circular

[1] See below, p. 141, footnote.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 73. WOMAN PUTTING THE SLIP ON A POT

FIG. 74. POLISHING THE POTS

[page 147]

251 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were
343 made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[A62]

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

348
339

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel
857 manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain 285 kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. [462]

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

[340] [291] [331]

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [482]

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285 clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained
482 from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A
[482] woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

[415]

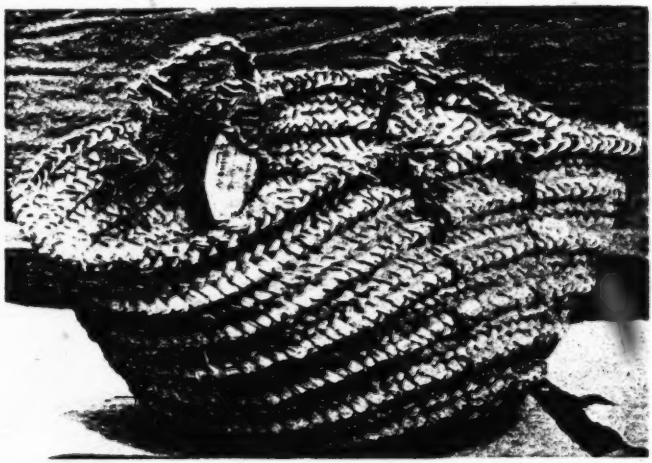

FIG. 83. A MAKṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the
482 women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried
516 with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-
462 jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age,
482 smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used
857 by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of
142 carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Egyptian Oases MR12

F 285

same material, any ends that remain over being laced into the sides of the basket below either handle. The base of the basket on the outside is also sometimes reinforced with cord coils.

E 285

I should mention that a basket in my possession, from the oasis of el-Farāfreh, displays the same technique as the *maḳṭaf*. It is of very fine workmanship and the plaits are very small.

F 285 415
[460]

FIG. 85. BASKET-GRANARIES

A similar technique is employed in the making of basket-granaries. These are of great size, and are made, so I was told, exclusively by men and, so far as I know, in Fayūm Province only; I have never, as yet, come across them elsewhere. Numbers of them are sold at the weekly markets, and their size may be estimated by comparison with the height of the people standing near them in the photograph (Fig. 85). I have frequently seen these basket-granaries on the roofs of houses in Fayūm. Sometimes they are quite globular in shape and are entirely covered with clay, this being done, so one of my servants told me, to keep the wind and dust from penetrating through the interstices. Only when small pieces of clay have fallen off is the original structure of basket-work revealed. All the basket-granaries that I have seen are extremely well made, and are very strong.

F 285

Many baskets in use all over Egypt are made in the follow-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 285 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415 F [460]

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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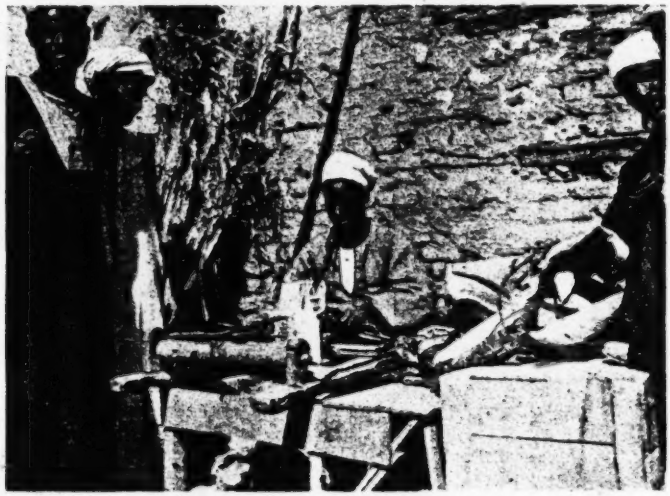
Spinning is, so far a I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 462

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 462



[286] [299] [291] [14a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The ' fan ' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

THE FELLAḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

252 oven shelf.[1] A large fire, made of dry *dura*-stalks, is kept burning
462 in the furnace below the shelf. When one side of the bread is done
[392] the bakeress turns it over with an iron rod (called *bashkūr*), made for this purpose, till the other side is cooked. When quite finished she removes it with the aid of the *bashkūr* and places it on the ground beside her.

The dough for the *battaw* is usually kneaded in a very large basket, and a great quantity is always made and baked at a time. Thus the task entails many hours of hard labour, and the women often begin the work in the afternoon and continue through the night until daybreak or even later. The baking takes place once or twice a month, and female relatives and friends usually come in to assist. Such bread, if made in a cleanly way, is excellent when fresh. It is

[286]
[291]

FIG. 93. ARAB WOMAN WEAVING A CARPET

262 crisp and thin, somewhat like the oatcake made in the North
252 of England and in Scotland. No one who has not made the attempt can realize how difficult it is to toss the dough on the 'fan.' I have myself made one or two efforts to assist in this breadmaking, but I made a hopeless failure of it, much to the amusement of my village friends.

443 Most villages, and all towns, have a weekly market, where a
[923] great variety of goods are for sale. The market-place is usually situated just outside the village, and is either Government property or belongs to some private individual. Every one who brings

[1] The oven is open in front, but is covered at the top. The smoke goes up
[252] through a hole in the ceiling, which opens on to the flat roof.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

down round the grinding stones on to the dirty ground it can hardly 256
be called pure or clean! Fortunately there is in most villages at

[462] [291] [241]

FIG. 110. WOMAN WINNOWING WITH THE HANDS

[251]

FIG. 111. A HAND-MILL

least one mill worked by steam, and the women take their flour there to be ground for a second time. During this process many of the impurities are removed from the flour.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

'AFĀRĪT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

462 312 [515] 165 115

norag. This is a heavy wooden seat, supported on a rough 243
chassis and moving on three axles armed with eleven solid 407
sharp-edged discs for breaking up the straw. The driver sits in the chair and guides the *gamoossa* round in a circle over the ears so that the discs chop them up, while another worker throws fresh stalks under the machine. The *norag*, which is peculiar to Egypt, costs about L.E. 8. An even [435]
simpler variety without the cutting discs averages L.E. 3.

Winnowing is done, as in most Mediterranean countries, 343
by throwing the chaff which contains the corn into the air 412
in the direction of the wind, after it has been trampled and chopped up For this the fellaheen use a two- or four-pronged wooden fork, called a *garuf*. With one *norag* and several *garufs* they can deal with the produce of about 25 feddans.

Last of all the grain is sifted in large sieves by the women [462]
and put into sacks, jars or baskets, ready for sale.

D. Berseem

In summer cattle are fed either on chopped straw mixed 246
with beans, or on barley ; but in winter they live on *berseem*, 231
an Egyptian species of clover (*trifolium alexandrinum*). *Berseem* is cultivated everywhere and covers a fifth of the total acreage, for it nourishes the ground as well as the cattle by absorbing the nitrogen from the air into the soil. It provides excellent forage, grows quickly and brings good returns for a minimum of work. The fellaheen sow it between September and November, often after maize, cotton or rice, and before taking away the old stalks which serve to protect the seedlings. After fifty days or so it is ready for a first cutting, followed by four more at intervals of 35 days; the cattle graze on it as it grows Two thirds of a feddan will feed a *gamoossa*, or a quarter of a feddan a donkey, for one season.

E. Other Food Crops

There are a number of other foodstuffs which are 243
produced by the fellah's labour from the soil of Egypt. It will suffice to mention the most important.

Rice was brought from India under the Caliphs, and is [175]
cultivated in the well-watered regions of Damietta and the Northern Delta.

262 which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the
252 national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

262 For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat
264 dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoos-sa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

[263] For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

262 The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bellai*).
146 This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread[43].

252 The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as
412 millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

412 This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of
462 two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper
252 one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

252 The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521

In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[177] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-ŝ-ŝibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

97.

Good Friends.

539x 406 [231] [312]

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers.

883 539x [312] [462]

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether the girls of the village have already been there to get water, as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song.

Ya sā'ye, yammû ṭāra,
waradet 'alēki-l-'adāra?
Waradet 'alēye ummû mandîl
wil-ka'b zēi el-ḫiyāre.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter One

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

THE natural resources, methods of production, means of livelihood and property system of any community provide a tangible mechanism which regulates and gives stability to the relations between its members in accordance with the value system governing that culture.[1] In Silwa, the village community under study, agriculture is the basic activity of the great majority of the population.

According to the 1947 Census the distribution of occupations in Silwa is as follows:[2]

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*
Farmers	1288	1451
Industrial workers	47	84
Masons	47	0
Transport	36	0
Trade	60	1
Personal servants	10	387
Servants in Govt. offices and other social services	78	1
Unproductive and undefined jobs	272	86
Unemployed	292	317
TOTAL: 4457	2130	2327

Taking this table as a criterion for village occupations, it is clear that more than 60 per cent of the total population are engaged in agriculture. Yet the official census does not define its categories of occupation, and is

[1] Ernest Beaglehole, *Property, A Study in Social Psychology*, London, 1931.
[2] *Population Census, 1947* (Book I, Province of Aswan), Government Press, Cairo, 1951, p. 25.

[p. 16 is blank]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half [323] a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[439] [1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1948.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [604] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five [477] years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the [299] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [291] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such 178 as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by [609] outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [512] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm. 463 198

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts. 463 462 [461] [581] [484] 463 554 [156] [156]

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village. 554 428

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite 554 423

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX III

511
146
[262]

In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

[463]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

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347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363 443 291 342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

243 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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304 under which he squats, so that his clients can choose whatever
463 pattern or patterns they prefer. Some are very elaborate, and
531 must involve considerable suffering on the part of the person who is tattooed with them. Many of the patterns are conventional designs, and I am assured that they have no special meaning, but are chosen according to individual taste and fancy. One pattern is called *esh-shagareh* (the tree), and is the one usually chosen by both men and women to decorate the back of the right hand. So far as I have observed, this pattern when used by women differs slightly from that used by men. The drawing given here (Fig. 21) I made from the hand of a woman; the marks were tattooed on her hand when she was a young girl.

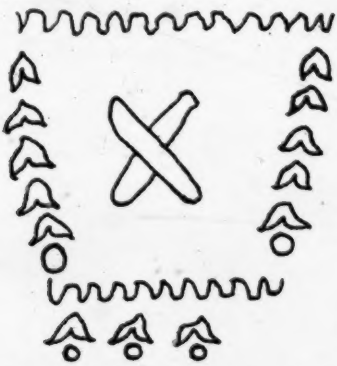

FIG. 21. TATTOO MARKS ON THE BACK OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT HAND AND ACROSS THE BACK OF THE WRIST

FIG. 22. TATTOO MARK FROM EDGE OF LOWER LIP TO BASE OF CHIN

304 The women are usually
531 tattooed from the edge of the lower lip down to the base of the chin. The pattern shown in Fig. 22, copied by me from the same woman, is also called *esh-shagareh*. The tattoo on the back of the hand and wrist, as well as on the fingers and thumb, is said to make them strong.

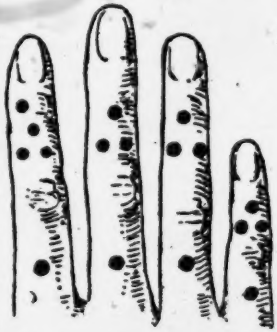

FIG. 23. TATTOO MARKS ON WOMAN'S FINGERS TO MAKE THEM STRONG

FIG. 24. TATTOO MARKS ON THUMB BELOW THE SECOND JOINT TO MAKE THE THUMB STRONG

304 A boy is often tattooed with a single dot on his chin and another near his right nostril; also most boys have three dots, thus ⁝, tattooed on one arm, just above the wrist. Boys are tattooed in

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [534] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F C the sign of their religion.

304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered.

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out.

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt,

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843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn iblīz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

844 ●463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[865] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

[463] [291] [285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the fol-
852 lowing mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the

[856] child wide open and beautiful eyes.

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [778] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 151 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

[463] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the 764 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt 779 have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137] [133] [764]

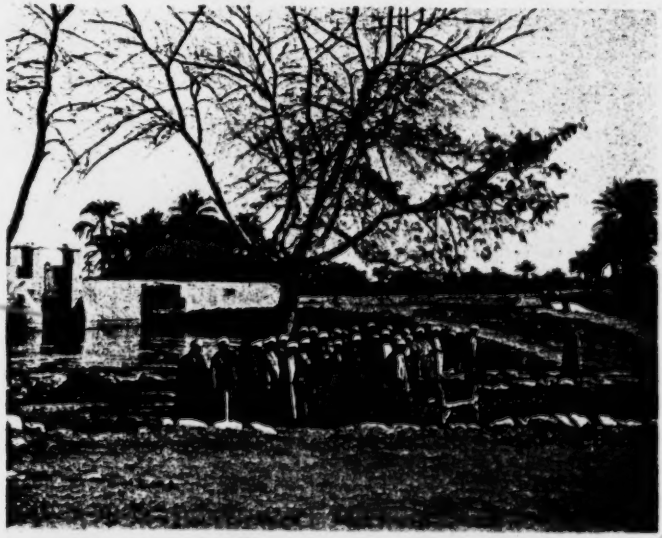

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their 151 wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites [793] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [194]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 285 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415 F [460]

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets, which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *ḳafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

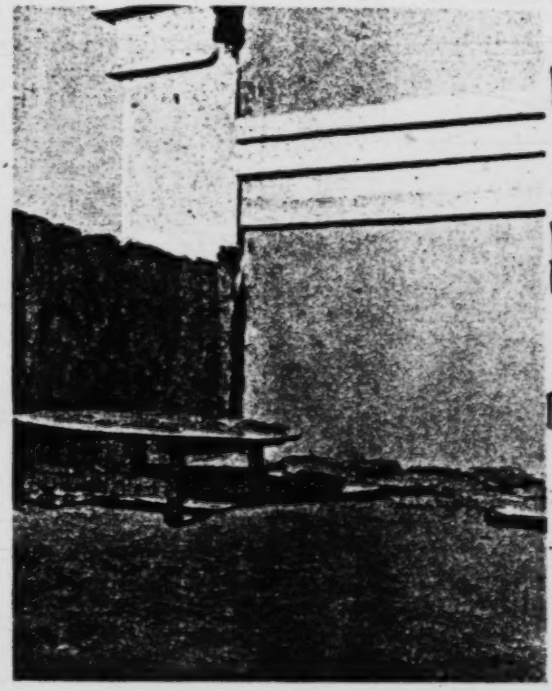

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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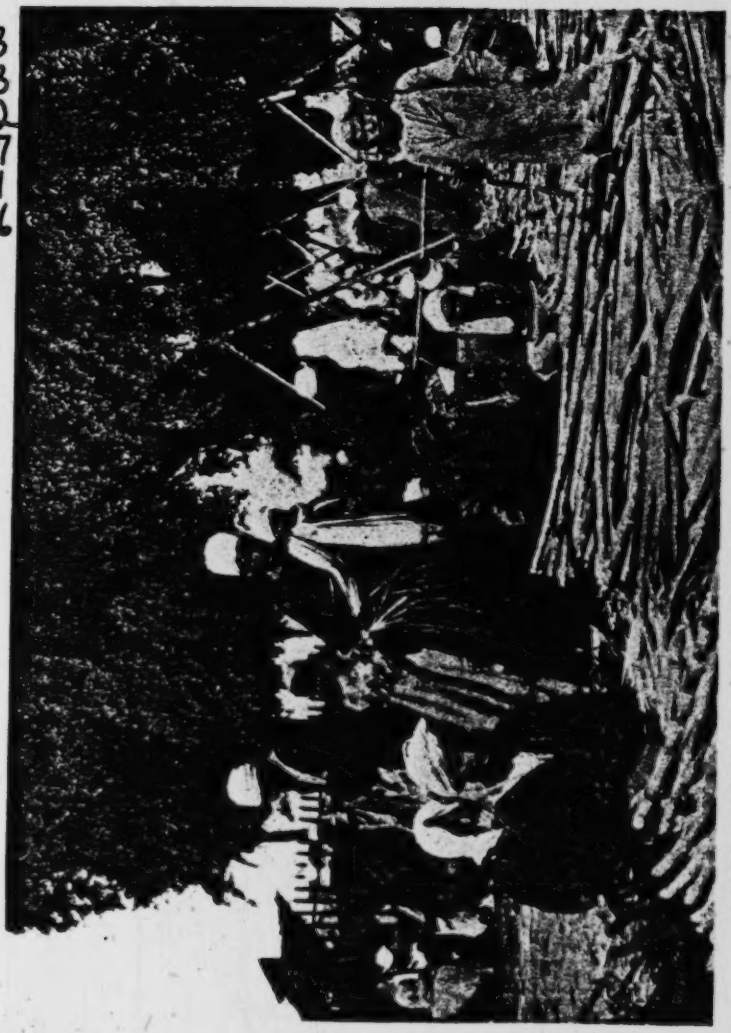

FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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789
778

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

[241]
[312]

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

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431

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

[463]
[793]
[794]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few
[212] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his
[965] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken
[424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and
124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of
114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken
[516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by
115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers,
[463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. ([24])

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [388]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [391]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found 304] lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it ([37]). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* ([38]) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a 465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (44).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take 461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 426] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751] at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. 113 [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

464

464 LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT--availability and scarcity of labor force; skilled and unskilled labor; incidence and types of unemployment (e.g., voluntary, intermittent, seasonal, cyclical, residual, technological); employment opportunities; labor mobility and turnover; employment agencies; regulation (e.g., age and sex restrictions); etc. See also:

Internal migration 166
Immigration 167
Business cycles 458
Unemployment insurance 748
Unemployment relief 746

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their [119] nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger [554] is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate [111] villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money • [464] to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

476 Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [602] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2. Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 789 780

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

corn *'arūseh*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *'afārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkere'senb is shown making food-offerings

A [532]

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Kha'emḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

A [776] [943]

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

F A 464 465

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

A [113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 464 465

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 241 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

A [113]

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads 133
out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river.

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the 133
political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricul- 137
tural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages.

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can 133
see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, 241
nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all.

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the [166 families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work 464] there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt.

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, 162
nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or 241
maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural.

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls. E F 161 162

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile ([11]). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 ([12]). F 162

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country. F [132 133 241]

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found ([16]). F 248 312 F 423 163 464 F [248 162]

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above F 162 134

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawêr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadven-
464 turous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) ([17]). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by 248
raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to 461
empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then 464
resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and press- [744]
ing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or [372]
cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering 243
about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population. 177 242 407 [464]

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today. 461 181

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed. 466 731 651

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane. [312]

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger; [652]

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, *the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread*. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
● [464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

113
[464
857]

and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651]

27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249
136]

28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465]

29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249]

31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735]

33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302]

38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma ʾultê-lak, ya ma ʾultê-lak 593
winte lissa fi-ʾangetak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šarʾīye,
5 *yaḥdūk bilād el-ṛarbīye,*
tiṣbaḥ ʿadīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak ʿala-l-muʾdāf rāiḥ
teṭalla' er-ramḥ es-saiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Sharʾīye,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

[501] 2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

[103] 4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāziq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

[104] 8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmūd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

[323] The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[939] [1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1948.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors. 465 [792]

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill. 463 [256] [977]

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people. [312] [465]

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month. 443 [609] [952]

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders. [939]

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, *by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get* permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former *receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf,* however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy promiscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore connected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[865] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

[463] In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

[291]
[285]

789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *kohl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

852

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the [782] poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I [465] believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the [789] house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a considerable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of [554] honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

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When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

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In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [178] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. C 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nŏrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [798] [965]

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

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243 strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields
465 carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only.
465 The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

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FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also
501 to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village
465 lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and
505 labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

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FIG. 106. WINNOWING

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FIG 107. A HARVESTER WITH HIS WAGES IN THE FORM OF A SHEAF OF CORN

[page 178]

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174 In the chapter dealing with survivals it will be seen that some
243 of these harvest customs can be definitely dated back to very early times in the history of the country.

I have stated above that harvesters are usually paid in kind
•465 instead of in cash, and that the women and young girls carry
243 these wages home on their heads. The methods of threshing and winnowing the corn received as wages are more primitive than those already described in this chapter. The threshing is done by beating

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[241]

FIG. 109. THRESHING WITH A STICK

with a stick (Fig. 109), and this process is often, though not always, carried out by the women. When threshed the corn is usually
[415] placed in a large, round tin bath, and the winnowing is done by simply taking up the grain in the hands and throwing it into the air (Fig. 110). The chaff is blown away by the wind, the grain falling down again into the bath. It then goes through a second process of winnowing with a sieve.

256 The grain, when required for use, is ground in primitive hand-mills, and "two women . . . grinding at the mill" is quite a common sight in Egyptian villages (Fig. 111). The stones from which these hand-mills are made are obtained, so I was informed, from the desert, and are chipped into the desired shape. The flour is very coarse after this grinding, and, moreover, after it has fallen

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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [965] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

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[532]

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FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

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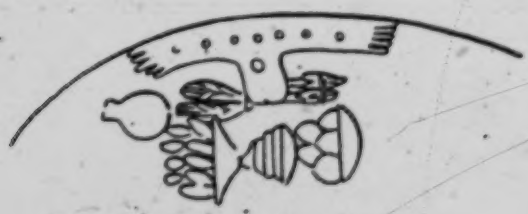
second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]



A [789 778 532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥekat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏf*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳih* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

A [789 778 532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

A F 789 782

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

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[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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corn *'arūsek*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *'afārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkere'senb is shown making food-offerings

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Kha'emḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

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be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 241 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 134.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

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[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 405 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

461
465 the produce of the vegetable patch, or a present of maize.

The Fellah as Share-Cropper

427 As day labourer the fellah works on large properties, as
465 *métayer* or share-cropper on a small plot of five or at most ten feddans. Under this system the owner enters into partnership with the fellah as follows:

The owner pays the taxes and irrigation dues, provides the farm implements, cattle, seed and manure. The fellah, as head of a family, provides labour for all the year's crops, from ploughing to harvest. For this he receives a fifth or a quarter of the yield of his plot. He may also bear half the expenses, in which case he takes half the crop. The contract is always verbal, and varies in detail.

This system involves no risk as it guarantees the owner a maximum of work, and the fellah his livelihood. It cannot, however, be very profitable to the fellah, because even if he labours continuously with every possible aid from his family he cannot manage to work more than five feddans. At the end of the year he has only the produce of one or one and a quarter feddans, that is to say about L.E. 12, for the efforts of his whole family over twelve months. In a bad year he will have less to show even than this. Finding
[426] himself short of money before harvest, he goes to the owner for an advance to buy a *gallabiya*, or pay the expenses of a circumcision or a funeral. Such loans, with their interest, sometimes come to more than his part of the bargain. In this case he will not only receive nothing when accounts come to be settled, but in addition his work will be already pledged for the following year.

The Fellah as Tenant Farmer

427 To rent land outright is more adventurous. The tenant takes a field at a fairly high rent, from L.E. 6 to L.E. 22 a feddan according to the district; he pays all expenses, but keeps all the produce. The owner is responsible only for taxes. The lease is long, and usually covers the full rotation of crops over two or three years.

For example a fellah of the rich district of Mit-Ghamr rents two feddans at L.E. 20 for the agricultural year. He
[243 plants one with cotton, which produces 4 *cantars* (31), each
248] worth about L.E. $3^1/_4$. The cotton goes to the owner, making L.E. 14 towards the rent. On the other feddan he sows

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a ● 465] metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (**).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take 461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise. [276 424]

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

113 [464 857] and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[1465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [465]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-ward ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʿāš ʿalē dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukūb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled here!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 1 and No. 7, l. 2.

5. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger;

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[652]

it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble : 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

574 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (").

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century ("). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

[651 681 731 661]

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

[453]

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At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

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24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

×539 461 [291] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballaṣ aḥḍar u-melān!
Ya giḏ'an, iḏ'u rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

[192] 1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē higgi, balāš dalā'a;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafā'a.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl uṣiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

38.

×539
466

El-'afu, ya bē, yafendīna,
win kunna 'ibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraddīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [576] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

[593] 2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 3. Another said: rabbīna, raddīna.

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3. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

244 312 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth downward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 476] A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20, according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is [887 857] left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed after the last war. 641 636 453

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of providing loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot. 453 426

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour. 657 426 474

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have 474

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (*). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest, and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[420] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kalâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafîr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the felleh's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

311
474
291
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Digging ditches

248
133

Putting the harvested cotton into sacks

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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog' and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their [779] nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger [554] is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate [777] villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money [964] to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

476 Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

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The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

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702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [609] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [499] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [299] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the [291] older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by 178 outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village [609] economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [499] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [593] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [480] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḳṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain 285 kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. [462]

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

[340] [291] [331]

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [485]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

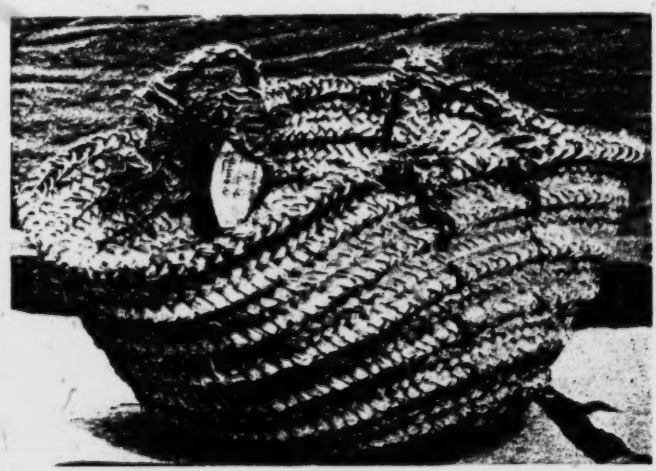

FIG. 83. A MAKṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abriq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

ʿĒb ʿalēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

539
527
821
[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband ʿAli, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

ʿAli, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast; for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semīse, ya semīse,
lagl ʿAli u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-ʿaginha ʾuddāmha.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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172
482
415

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

At the Work of Excavation.

The Boys with their Rubbish-Baskets. (Excavations at Abuṣîr.)

8:Schaefer A -5 (1900-1901) 1904

MR13 Fellahin MR13

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415
482
291
312
142

Women Drawing Water.

6

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. [292] When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with [494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 619 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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11.

The Straggler.

539x
788
[484]

The pilgrimage to Mecca, which every pious Moslem is bound to make at least once in his life, is a long one; it goes by land and by sea, and for people unaccustomed to travel, it is attended with many cares and dangers. For this reason the pilgrims usually combine into caravans of some size. The little song pictures the perplexity of a straggler, who has missed connection with his caravan and is now totally at a loss.

Lines 1—2 are the words of another, who calls to the pilgrim: "Enough for to-day, for thou canst not possibly reach thy goal to-day!" Lines 3—7 are spoken by the pilgrim.

Sams el-ʿaṣāri ṛarabit,
yalli biladak buʿad!
Wana biladi Mikketi!
u-min ēn arūḥ?
5 *u-min ēn âgi?*
u-min ēn asaiyir markabi
u-min ēn azūrak, ya nabi?

"The afternoon sun has gone down,
Thou, whose country is afar off!" —
"O, the land I would go to is Mecca!
How shall I go?
5 How shall I reach my goal?
And how shall I sail my ship?
How shall I visit thee, O Prophet?"

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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5 *Raḥet tekubbē-trabha* 539x
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha. 527
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd 821
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyûṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyûṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [514] [261] [204] 484 [188] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN. 512

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not 562

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

171 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia,
*407 and says that an Egyptian governer of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dahla and Harga use a plough which at least in Harga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts—for as such we would have found plough type V—but can only be explained by the human hazard. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the
[487] picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis.

PROSPECTS

241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood—with its renewal of the fertility—then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil—which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in souther Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil—which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqy». This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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(1) Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough
[114] type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong to the Egyptian type I, i.e., the split handled plough.

(2) Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 333 331 342

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 342 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork. [137]

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept. [513]

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 372 488 731

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanûsh, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

656 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
731 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

353 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

231
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251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

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485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

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443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

61.

A Mother's Solicitude.

×539

[36] [491] In Middle and Lower Egypt, the villages are connected with one another by earthen dikes, which, during the time of the inundation, form the only communicating roads.

[625] The police are always at hand to imprison people. At roll-call, often, one or another of our workmen was announced as maḥbûs or "imprisoned".

Ma-lik betigri 'al-gusūr u-ḫēfe?
bagri 'ala waladi ḫadû eṭ-ṭēfe.

Why dost thou run so anxiously about on the dikes?
I seek my son, whom the patrol has caught!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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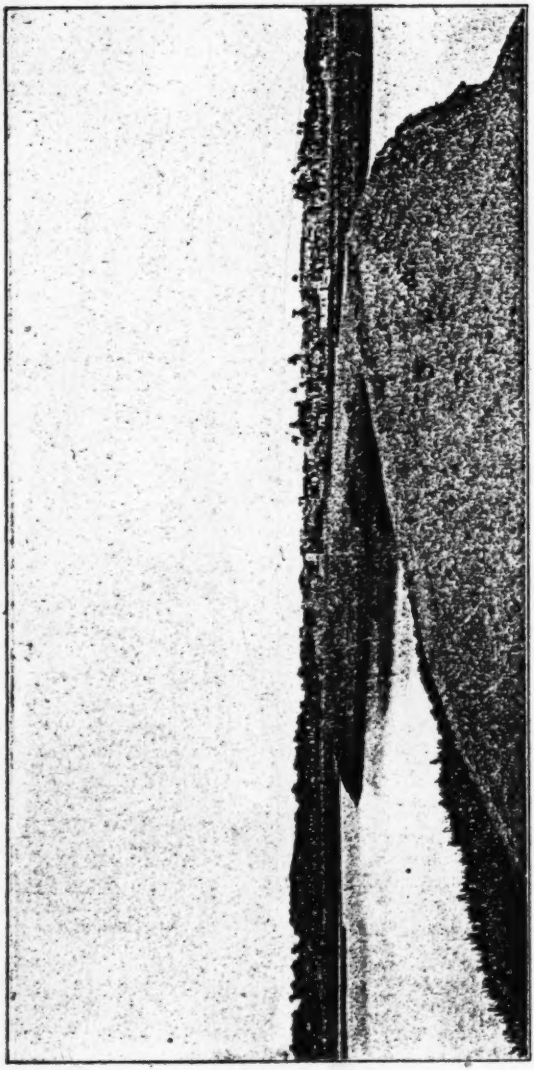

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

The dike which leads from Beni-Suëf to the town of Ehnasye.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]	[GIRLS]
885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .	All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.
[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.	Complete seclusion, whether married or not.
[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.	

863 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah"—the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the 594 family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [582] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is 584 prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 585 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she ● 492 is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [276]

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, F C 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to 775
her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the 682
friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others 769
on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations 764
and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the [823]
desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. 769
From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were [492]
walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by [793]
the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown 769
in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my 775
village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and
they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they be- F [825]
lieve that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there.
Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops
of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its
rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated
to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

F

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the 764
following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and 765
walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or 784
she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under
seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk.
Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires
to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor,
who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

F

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is 765
some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will 753
lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside 784
the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out
and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

F

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects 764
very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt
who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his rela- F
tions and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I C
started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings [492]
had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E
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152

the dancing women from outside), and the men had some difficulty in getting past them into the room again and closing the door. The sister got up and rushed toward the door leading into the room where her dead brother lay, crying out to him, "*Ta'āla, ta'āla!*" ("Come, come!"), the mourning women at the same time uttering their piercing cries of grief, so that the din was deafening. As the men came out with the coffin, which now contained the body, the pandemonium became greater than ever

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[492]

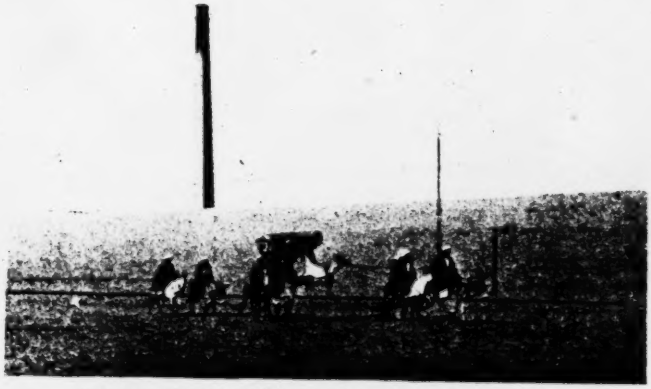

FIG. 55. COPTIC FUNERAL: COFFIN ON CAMEL'S BACK

The women shrieked, and the sister tore off her veil (at other times considered a most immodest thing to do), wrenched her dress open at the throat, and rent her garments to such a degree that her female companions, for decency's sake, were obliged to restrain her. The coffin was then placed on the ground, and the women seated themselves round it. They hammered with their fists on the lid, shrieking to the dead man, and flinging their arms wildly about in the air. The sister so completely lost her self-control that I urged the men to advance and take up the coffin. After some difficulty they managed to hoist it up on to their shoulders, and, followed by a crowd of screaming women, at last got out of the house. The coffin was placed on the back of a donkey, though a camel is more often used (see Fig. 55), and the procession set off for the Coptic monastery situated in the desert a few miles away.

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 764 492 152

I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

E 764 794 788 533

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

E [537]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [198] [965]

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only. The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conveys over the cattle and labourers every morning, and brings them back just before sunset (Fig. 108).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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243 431 264 789

threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231] [492]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907] [291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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[492]
[231]
[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *ʿafārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *ʿafārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

782
776
174

[412]
[291]
[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *ʿafārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *ʿafrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *ʿafārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *ʿafrīteh* (feminine form of *ʿafrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

132 He is exposed to the elements at a mean temperature
461 of 80°F in summer and 53°F in winter; he works barefoot and bare-headed. His labour is all muscular, and apart from his hands he uses only a few primitive implements, which, however, owing to the quality of the Egyptian soil and the multitude of manual labourers, are quite adequate.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

412 He uses the *fass* with great dexterity for a hundred different tasks, to turn and break the clods of earth, to dig furrows and till the land. The *fass* is a big tool, like a hoe, but heavy and solid. Its front part being fairly wide, it also serves as a spade. Even the poorest of labourers owns a *fass*; it is an indispensable addition to his own strong arm.

407 It may be said that every field in Egypt is tilled by hand,
[492] even when the fellah works with a plough, for the Egyptian plough is more of a tool than a machine, though it weighs 100 lb., and is carried to and from the field on donkey-back.

This is *el mihrat*, the Arab plough without wheels or breast, which is found in Palestine, in Syria and throughout North Africa. It consists of a wooden frame tipped with a flat, ogival share about 10 ins. long, and a shaft about 11 feet long, to which the draught animals are attached by a straight yoke pressing not on the forehead, as in Europe, but on the
231 withers. The draught-animals may be two *gamoossas*,
241 the smallholder's *gamoossa* and a donkey, or two animals hired for the occasion — sometimes even a camel and a donkey together.

241 The ploughman drives the share in by pressing on the
461 single handle, and guides the animals as they move by hand and voice, without as a rule using either bridle or whip. In this way he can till from one third to half a feddan a day. If he is an owner his beasts will be better fed, and he will be able to till as much as three quarters of a feddan in a day. The time employed in ploughing a field is from ten to twenty-five days a year. Except in the districts under basin irrigation this work can be carried on at any season.

407 In the concluding chapter of their study of Egyptian
241 ploughing[20] Audebeau and Mosseri write: 'The Egyptian plough is the typical implement of areas where it is only necessary to scratch the surface in order to bury the seed

243 weeks later the stalks stand higher than a man and are laden with heavy ears. It is time for harvesting. The workers, mainly women and children, pile the stalks into heaps, and then make a first sorting, throwing on one side the ears of maize, on the other the stripped stalks. The yield of a maize crop may be ten or twelve *ardebs* to the feddan, but the average for the country is seven and a half.

The stalks are now set up on end and intertwined to make a sort of circular hedge round the heaps of ears. In this open enclosure the fellaheen work day and night to strip the ears and break out the yellow grain, bigger than peas, [342 which they put into baskets and carry home. The stalks 372] are also taken home on donkey back to serve as fuel or reinforcement for the roof. Nothing must be wasted.

C. Wheat

Wheat, on the other hand, has been since antiquity a traditional Egyptian crop. It is nowadays regaining some of the importance which it lost earlier to cotton, and is benefiting from the recent tendency towards greater variety of crops. In 1934 1,388,673 feddans were sown. In 1939 the area had increased to 1,466,000 feddans, which gave a total yield of 8,600,000 ardebs, or an average of 5.96 per feddan.

[262 Almost all the wheat is consumed in Epgyt, by middle- 439] class Egyptians and the people in the towns. Owing to its low percentage of gluten and record earth-content it is barely exportable, though in 1937 Germany was negotiating purchases. Europeans and rich Egyptians prefer foreign flour, mostly imported from Australia or Canada.

The fellah sows his wheat in November. He pays great [312 attention to manuring and watering up to the period of the 242] *gaffaf*, after which he waters it only once or twice more before harvest. He harvests in April, with a primitive sickle or by hand. The crop is bound into sheaves and carried on donkey- [492] or camel-back to the communal threshing-floor, where it is untied.

Each family in turn spreads out its crop. The *gamoossa* is brought to tread out the ears of corn spread over the ground. The poorest of the fellaheen beat their corn with [407] their staves (*nabbuts*). More often several of them share a

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
MR13 Fellahin MR13

*407 3 Handles and Grip.—The handles are all over Egypt made of wood and attain the height of between 100 and 110 cms. As already mentioned the handle or handles are fixed to the base in different methods which will be explained later. The grip is also a wooden peg either protrouding longitudinally in the case of one handle, or split handle, or a cross beam fixed to the two handles in the double handled types. The handles and the grip serve in the Egyptian ploughs to control the manouvering of the plough and the depth of the ploughing and are handled either by one hand or both hands according to the manner in which the grip is fixed.

4. The Beam.—It is either a straight or curved wooden pole which is attached to the base in different ways, and serves to connect the whole plough with the yoke by inserting a cross peg in a socket holed at the fore end of the beam. The beam attains a length which varies between 300 cms. and 350 cms. and usually has a square cross-section of 10 by 10 cms.

5. The Pin.—This is an iron bar which attains the length of about 50 cms. and a breadth of about 4 cms. This type of pin prevails all over ploughes in Egypt except in type V where we find the pin made of wood. Moreover the iron pin has a set of holes in which a peg is inserted over the beam to prevent it from springing upwards during ploughing, and at the same time controls the angle of the plough.

● 492 6. The Yoke. This is a wooden pole of about 270 cms. in length, which is put on necks of the animals drawing the plough. To fulfil its purpose the yoke has five pegs: one in the middle to which the rope connecting it to the beam is attached, and two pegs at each end of the yoke to which the two ends of the rope which encircles the neck of the [184] animal are tied. Such a yoke is universal all over Egypt except in type VI [241] where the plough is drawn by one animal, thus requiring a small curved yoke to which the single animal is harnessed.

*407 Such are the basic parts of the Egyptian plough and the previous description will be found useful in both understanding the structure of the plough at large, and illuminating in the following comparison.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

Grievous Parting.

539x

44.

Ya sāyi' ir-ragb,
ṭāṭi-li ri'āb en-nā',
lamma awadda' muḥebbīni
wa'awid! — sā'!
5 *Walla, el-furā' ṣa'b!*
Ya ḥādi el-maṭaye, sā'!
tekūn 'al-alla!

Thou driver of the caravan,
Bend down the camels' necks for me,
That I may take leave of my loved ones,
Again and again! — Drive on!
5 By Allah the parting is hard!
There! thou driver of the camels, now drive on,
And Allah be with thee!

2. The camel usually carries its head very high, and in order to make the animal lie down, the driver pulls its head down by the bridle. [492]

[p. 46 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Raiyān ya figl aḥḍar!
Feddān we-nuṣṣo-mkassar!
La'etni gamīle betitmaḫṭar,
we-saḥabt ginebi we-ḥmāri
5 *we-nādêt, ma ḥaddē gāni.*

Fresh, green radishes!
An acreful and half of it broken!
A beauty met me, swaying as she walked,
But I drew my baskets and my donkey away,
5 [And called but no one came to me.]

2. A field, of about one and one twentieth acres, full of [244] them, and half of them broken in pulling them, — the radishes were so tender (according to Maḥmûd). Vollers suggests another interpretation: "One acre of the field is cultivated, but half [426] of this acre is encumbered with debts (mekassar)."

4. The two large baskets, which are strapped or tied [492] together, and hang on either side of the donkey. According [415] to Maḥmûd this line means: I withstood the temptation because I was so anxious to bring the radishes fresh to you.

5. The connection between this line and the preceeding ones, is not very clear. It is possible that the line does not belong here. It occurs also in No. 74 and there in the proper place.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback. F 585 492

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her! F 585 493 177 F [554]

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor. F 585 535 F [292] [076]

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening, F C 585 [492]

[1] See p. 87.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country
571 roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the
[505 ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent.
292] When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with
494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have
[497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This
181 with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his out-
619 look in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [788] [103] [131]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbiye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

Dināre 'ālet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarrag 'al-bagūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

539x 852 304

40. 41.

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292 494] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 619 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

243 strings of women and children can be seen coming from the fields
465 carrying their wages on their heads. The custom of paying in kind is a very ancient one, and is not confined to harvesters only.
465 The village barber is also paid by his fellow-villagers in this way, with beans and corn, and those who thus remunerate him can

[492]
[465]
[431]

FIG. 100. A MUEDDIN RIDING HOME WITH HIS GIFT OF FIRSTFRUITS

demand his services for shaving and haircutting for a year. Only those, however, of his own village can pay the barber in this way; outsiders must pay him in cash. This rule applies also
● 501 to the ferryman, who, when the fields belonging to a village
465 lie on the opposite bank of a canal, conve[illegible] over the cattle and
505 labourers every morning, and brings them [illegible]k just before sunset (Fig. 108).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

[page 179]

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

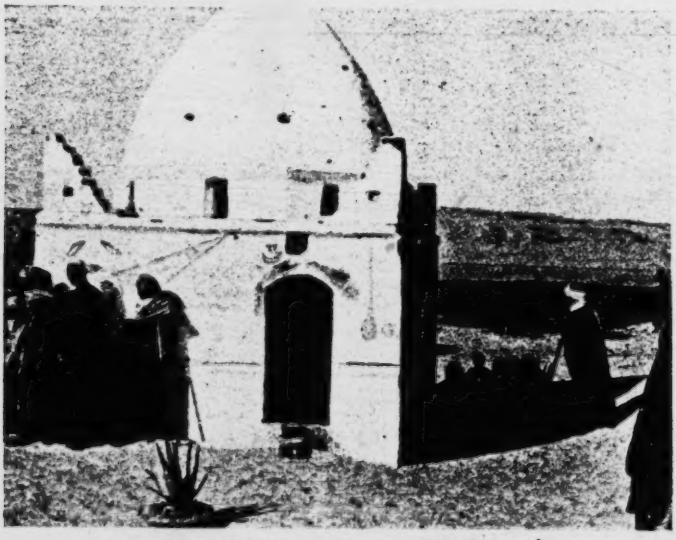

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*

501
361
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A village and ferry on the Nile

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With them

Page 160(C)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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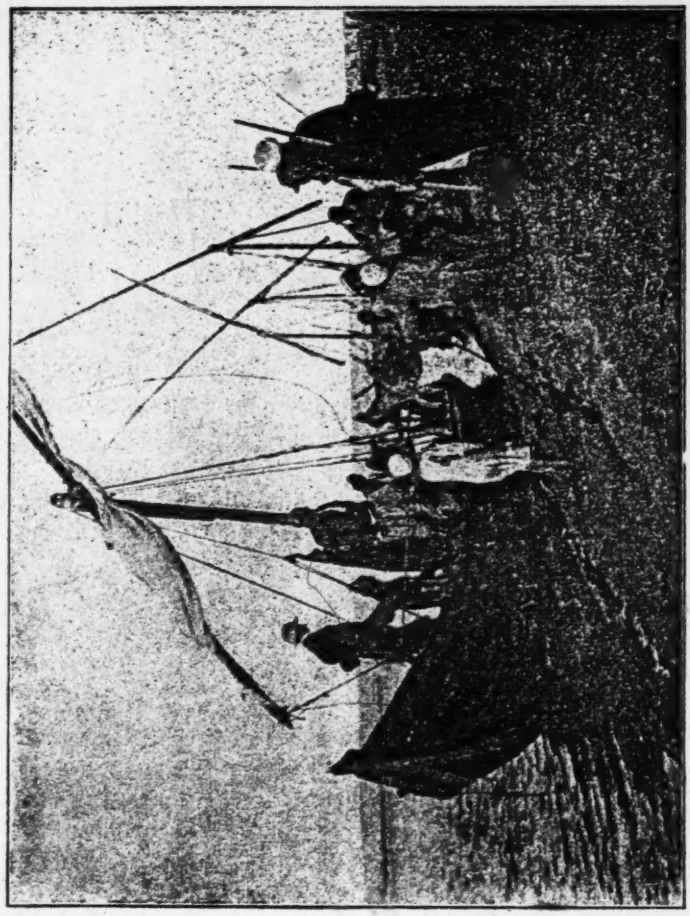


Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Ferry-boat in Upper-Egypt.
At Ḥagg Qandil.

x539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabîye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195). [501]

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'ye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzî') and Ṭanṭa. [103]

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds. [114]

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

x539 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

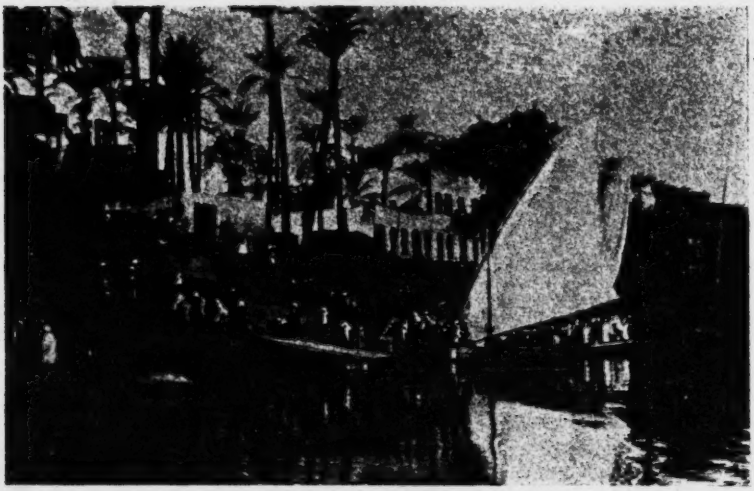
FIG. 50. CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

A PEASANT GROOP *(Ch VI)*



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A village and ferry on the Nile

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With them

Page 160(C)

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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FIG. 108. A FERRY-BOAT

[page 179]

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix Three

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SILWA

In discussing the standard of living in the village, the writer is aware that the term is essentially a relative or comparative one. Its application in such a manner is almost impossible as there is no way of comparing the present conditions of the village with those of the past or with those of the town. Certain changes in the demands of the peasants as a result of increasing contacts with town life will be discussed later; it is sufficient here to mention that the villagers, at least those who frequent the town, are aware of other standards of living to which they would like to attain. Consumption, production and human needs are sociologically relevant only in so far as they are related to a particular society. For a sociological enquiry human needs have no absolute validity independent of their cultural context and their knowledge by the members of that particular community. Beyond this any statements concerning minimum standard of living or basic needs inevitably imply a value judgment.[1]

Here the criterion to be adopted for the evaluation of the standard of living is an internal one; in other words, we are attempting to compute whether the land owned at present by the people in the village is sufficient to supply their needs as envisaged by the people themselves.

The main index for such an evaluation would be the relation between the average income and the average consumption *per capita*. The value of crops is estimated in the following computation according to 1951 prices.

The acre in winter crop produces on an average:[2]

Product		*Price per unit*[3] *in £E*	*Total*
4 ardabs of wheat	..	6	24
1 ardab of barley	..	3	3
1 ardab of beans	..	6	6
			£E33

[1] See J. E. Goldthorpe, 'An Examination of the Concept of Need', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. XLII, Section 10, 1950. Also, M. Read, *Native Standards of Living*.

[2] As a rule, for winter crop, two-thirds of the acre is sown with wheat and the rest with barley and beans. [3] The Egyptian pound is almost equivalent to the English pound.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

434
511
[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product		*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs	..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 4

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511 On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion [593] which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

Average consumption is then:			Price in £E
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs		..	6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

		£E
Clothes	..	4
Tea and sugar	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.	..	1
		£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX III

511
146
[462]

In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

[463]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

F 162 241 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E F 161 The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known. However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus(10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive and recuperative quality of the soil.'

E F 161 511 In point of fact, once order and public security were re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E F 161 162 The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000 inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, the problem of over-population will become acute. The palliatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken : on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production ; and on the other hand a policy of re-allotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

427 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken
511 from us, we will steal." ([32])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen
554 possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number
183 own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as
651 a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last
452 usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows
427 from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([33]).

423
432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. 594
His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry 231
at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children 241
look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, 461
gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself.

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the 511
strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the 434
most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given):

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

511 why the balance of the fellah's budget is so easily upset,
434 and that is why he is so often swamped by debts and interest.

454 If in any given year, by a stroke of good fortune, none
181 of these extraordinary expenses befall him, the fellah, hoarding piastre after piastre in a pot hidden in the earth, can at last see his dream come true, and buy a *gamoosa* or a few *kirats* of land. It is this alluring possibility, always just round the corner, which makes him continue year after year, like the soil and with the soil, the same unwearying work.

F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the '*ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.

Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F 782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VII

THE FELLAH AT HOME

On his return from the East in 1932, Christian de Caters 342
spoke as follows about the houses of the fellaheen (*Echo de* 511
Paris, 16.6.32): "I have seen the poorest villages of a 735
Mancha in Spain, the hovels of the Cape Verde islanders, 171
and the reed huts of the Lundas, a savage tribe in the depths of Angola, but nowhere have I seen greater distress than in Egypt."

On the other hand, Lozach, in *Le Delta du Nil* (Cairo, 1935), finds that the fellah's home is "not far behind the stone or mud huts with a thatched roof which are still common in many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is in any case far superior to the miserable hovels in which most of the peasants of Tunisia or Algeria live".

Which statement is one to believe? It all depends on the point of view and the standard of reference. Such comparisons are in all probability misleading, especially when the cases compared are not parallel. A personal impression or opinion is not so useful as an actual description of the fellah's home, and of his life in it. This will show us how far the house is suited not merely to the fellah but also to the land he works on.

We have seen the public parts of the village. Let us 342
look now at the private dwellings of the fellaheen, without concerning ourselves with the big house belonging to the landowner or the residence of the *'omda*.

There are certain exceptions to be noticed first: —

1. Stone houses, which are found on the edges of the desert in Upper Egypt. The nearness of the cliffs makes it possible for the fellah to transport the stones for building in his basket. Some of these houses have a vaulted or domed roof.

2. Red-brick houses, without pointing, which are quite common in Lower Egypt. These presuppose a certain standard of living.

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([9]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([1]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an undoubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave. 178 511 735

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements. [171]

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit. 735 185

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" (").

In this low standard of living we must also include moral poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 511 735

511
735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.
656 The greater number of official measures, for example,
746 are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that *they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution* of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–35.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

568 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[283] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[282] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[279] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shak Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour
[521] free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[62] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[182] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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512 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours,
562 yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

[513] Before sunrise women and children are already awake and moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn pro-
515 ceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette, however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention;
[512] the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and
[368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [272]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [282]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [271]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have [188] more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of [195] the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1] 513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[519]

not accept as one of the commendable spheres of indulgence in a pious life.[1] While mothers may occasionally tell their children a story at night, fathers could never be expected to do it, as it might encourage that intimacy and levity towards them which is incompatible with the ideal of paternal respect. Story-hearing and telling is a feature of the child and adolescent groups. The writer has not found literate people in Silwa entertaining the reading of novels in the modern sense, as they are regarded 'unreal' and of no immediate value.[2] Children and adolescents must be weaned away as quickly as possible from such imaginative frivolities like story-telling, and acquire the didactic literature of proverbs and wise sayings that enable the boy to cope with the realistic and matter-of-fact affairs of life. The accumulated wisdom of the past, the adults think, is contained in these proverbs and the reported deeds and acts of men of religious or social prestige. They are inordinately fond of quoting proverbs and maxims whenever an occasion for them arises. Rattray has observed the African's predilection for proverbs in his speech: much the same might be said for Silwa. He states that the best retort 'for any new-fangled suggestion or argument, however convincing, is to quote some proverb, however banal and inept, for such a reply is invested with all the force and sanctity of immemorial usage, and therefore conclusive'.[3]

Story-telling also includes the interesting events that happened in the village, or that happened to children. It is a more preferable pastime in winter than in summer, when boys, and occasionally girls, gather at a cosy corner outside the house 'to curtail the long winter nights' as one of the boys put it. On the whole, one can say that a child, on the average, spends an hour a week in these story-telling sessions. But this does not mean that all children take part in these sessions, or know fairy tales and stories. In fact, quite a few children, of both sexes, whom I asked in the compulsory school and in the neighbourhood, knew no stories of any kind. If parents tolerate these story-telling sessions, they do not consider them of any educative value at all.

Children, however, listen to stories and tell them to each other, not in the house or in the presence of the father, but usually outside the house. They will stop their narration on the approach of an adult, and consequently the writer was not able to listen to or observe any of their normal sessions. These sessions are seldom held during the day, as the boys believe that story-telling in daylight brings wrath, like sleeping in the late afternoon (nawmat al asr). Here one sees the functional relationship between children's leisure and their economic responsibilities. Through such beliefs, with their concomitant emotional effects, the scope for flouting responsibility for work is delimited in a roundabout way. Like play, the community

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[1] See Chapter VII for the connection of 'labw' and play.

[2] There are no novels at all amongst the books that the villagers possess.

[3] R. S. Rattray, 'The African Child in Proverb, Folklore and Fact', in *Africa*, Vol. VI, 1933, p. 426. For some of the proverbs collected in the village, see Appendix VI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 794 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying *"Akh! akh! akh!"* ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *kulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *kandīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rūḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For ● 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (**). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare- 744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 333 331

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to [illegible]sure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 342 342 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork. [137]

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept. [513]

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 372 488 731

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (") Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zariba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoosa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [370 354 415] [496 515]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 513 [183] [182] [179] In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his 512 264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His [272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes [276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous [265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed [262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, 512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, 461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be [559] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bukra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. [521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire [574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the 512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn [539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is [62] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted [182] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after 512
the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys [782]
his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of
bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt [264]
fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, 512
especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies 513
down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady
spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets
become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does [783]
he again move, when he begins the second portion of the [782]
day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, [264]
afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up
during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed
and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with 512
the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is 461
again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings [782]
by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning
shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less 461
leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not over- [241]
work himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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512 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours,
562 yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

[513] Before sunrise women and children are already awake and moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn pro-
515 ceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette,
[512] however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention; the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and
[368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [272]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [171]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, the girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 882 883 183

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 [183] 831 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [834]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [882]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'There are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation. [841]

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183--analyst]

up and is transmitted in water and sodden ground, in the /164
stagnant village ponds, and, since the development of perennial irrigation, in the standing water of runnels and badly levelled canals.

Bilharzia is not in itself a serious disease. But, beginning with the passing of blood in the urine, it often develops, through lack of attention, into complications such as the stone, fistula, and ulceration of the penis. The infection may reach the kidneys, the liver and even the eyes. Above all, it lasts for 18 or 20 years. 90% of the male fellaheen are affected by it and become accustomed to passing blood and feeling continually below par.

Bilharzia is transmitted through urine and water; hookworm through earth and excrement. Like bilharzia, hookworm is a collective disease, a permanent epidemic, and is introduced into the system by a parasite which passes through the skin. Ankylostomiasis is less widespread than bilharzia, but more dangerous, since it consumes the red corpuscles of the blood (44).

As the fellaheen never make use of human dung, and /514 ●
have never learnt the use of latrines, they relieve themselves /164
no matter where. If they are already infected with the worm, [24]
every such place is a new source of danger to their fellows, who walk barefoot or lie down heedlessly on the ground. The worm can move several feet in the darkness; it settles in damp soil, whence it passes through the skin to the intestines.

You may see countless men and women in the prime of /164
life who are stricken with this disease, their faces puffy and lifeless with its ravages. Neither their vigorous constitution, their youth, nor the treatment they receive has been able to save them.

Malaria, spread by the ricefields and *birkas*, affects 65% of the fellaheen, and in some villages East of the Delta as many as 90%.

What makes these three diseases so alarming is not so much their inherent seriousness as their constantly widening extent, and the way in which the fellaheen themselves by their work and their manner of life contribute unconsciously to the perpetuation of the evil. It should also be remarked that the Government's measures to combat these diseases have not as yet had very much effect.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [231]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [233]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [868] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl (composed of two black [584]
outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together [591]
with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers.

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' asin case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in [585]
the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their [431]
contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardlyany men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes.

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. [585]
Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. [515]
On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [352] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are un- [744] methodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

159 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the [834] women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 882 755 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders 755 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have 854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing 164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently [449] allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffering. [784] As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, [515] for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which 743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally 758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their 197 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, 164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle,*" and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharkiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
197 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
994 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

[854]
[291]
[192]

854

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[153] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
●515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to
789 conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers
[841] them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives
754 a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on
789 the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following
[791] manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency
[758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are em-
842 ployed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-
164 rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been
163 pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor,
● 515 venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

CONTINUED
ON
NEXT FICHE

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E [152] E [302] E [123] E [515] E [292] E [302]

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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791 796

Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 515 787 796

This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

[29]

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

791 782 796

A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with. [2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 181. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 515 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically 855 all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern [171] counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are 753 adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

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[515]
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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

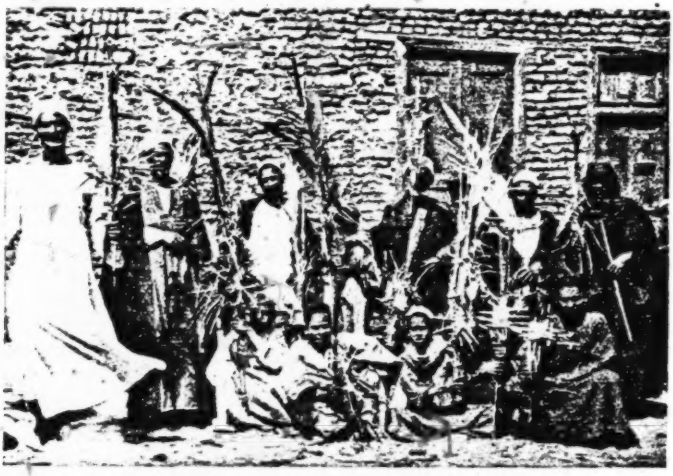

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FA 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

FA 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

FA 515 269 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

FA 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

FA 849

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it ([27]). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* ([28]) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([30]). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (41). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515]
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed ? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (**) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. 164 [167] 702

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 316
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

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I go visiting my parishioners", says Mgr Khouzam, Bishop of Thebes, "I find few houses with doors. They have square holes for entrances, and these are the only openings. The sole furniture is an oven for bread, a jar of water, a cooking pot and a bowl. In a few houses there is a cord stretched across a corner from wall to wall. This is the wardrobe, where spare clothes are hung. The roof is so low as to be oppressive". F 353 F [352 415]

Fortunately, houses normally have two, if not three, rooms. (**) Apart from slight variations in plan, size and arrangement, these usually comprise:

1. A hall (*mandara*). Against the right-hand wall is built a long raised seat (*mastaba*). As the outside door opens into it, this is the best-lighted room in the house. It is used for visitors and guests.

2. Opening into this is the combined sleeping-room and kitchen. In a corner is the oven, built of bricks and set against the wall. Its flat top forms a kind of bed, on which two people sleep in winter. There is no chimney. The smoke escapes by the loophole in the wall. F [513]

3. Further in still is a little yard (*zarîba*) about six foot wide and partly covered with maize thatch. This serves as a stable for the *gamoossa* and the donkey, but can be approached only through the front door. F [231]

The distinction is not very rigid, and there is nothing to prevent the sitting-room from serving as a stable, or the yard as summer sleeping-quarters. The fowls live everywhere; the pigeons nest in niches in the outer wall, or in petrol tins piled together. In villages where there is a Coptic majority, the pigs must also be taken into account; the Christian fellaheen rear these, not for themselves, but for European pork-butchers. As often as not, we must add that friend of the fellah and guardian of his goods, his shaggy night-howling dog. F c 352 231

The floor of the house is of beaten earth. The furniture is heaped up in disorder in the corners. For meals there is a Primus stove, one or two copper cooking-pots, and a low round table of white wood about three feet wide and eighteen inches high. For sleeping there are straw mats, a few cotton coverlets, or perhaps only a big sack. Sometimes there are beds constructed of palm branches (in the same way as chicken coops) and perhaps a cotton-stuffed mattress. For household F 352 353 [379 354] 415] [296 515]

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

361
185 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can
654 penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings,
361 and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level.
185 The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of
654 the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed
342 for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

[252 Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-
515] area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for
[346] feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus
[347] for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

[312] Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

654 The Government, for its part, has decided to build a
341 model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuild-
361 ing of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

Greek, not satisfied with building good houses of red brick 747
and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
a doctor to come every week from the town. He has estab- 744
lished a model school, and, best of all, has engaged an assist-
ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
baths, but simply used what every peasant woman has
at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

764
133
291

Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

Page 160 (B)

39. *T.*—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. 113 [515 526]

40. *T.*—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T.*—At Akhmim and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

18.

539x
854

One of the songs with which the mothers quiet the little ones, and in which one often seeks in vain for the connection. This song, with a few variations, was heard by Goldziher in Cairo in 1873. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft 33, p. 612.)

Ya naṭara, ṣubbīha,
ḫalli-l-wizz yeʿūm fīha.
Bint uḫti ʾarʿa ʾarʿa,
ḥadha-d-dīb u-rāḥ yirʿa,
5 *ʾarʾašha taḥt et-tirʿa.*

O Rain, pour it out!
Let the geese go swimming in it!
My little niece is scab-headed, scab-headed, [164]
The wolf has caught her and gone to eating,
5 He has gnawed her to pieces in the canal.

1. Compare No. 17, l. 2.
2. Let it rain hard enough to form puddles, in which geese can swim.
3. Owing to the filth in which the country children grow up, scabby heads are not rare. [515]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

512 562 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours, yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

[513] Before sunrise women and children are already awake and moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn proceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette, ●515 however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention; [512] the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing [368] establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties
may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its
court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The low 000

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Amongst the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters. 582

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown. 583 [584] [586] 421

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle. 585 [262]

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall. [515]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. " Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

[291]
[764]
[516]

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

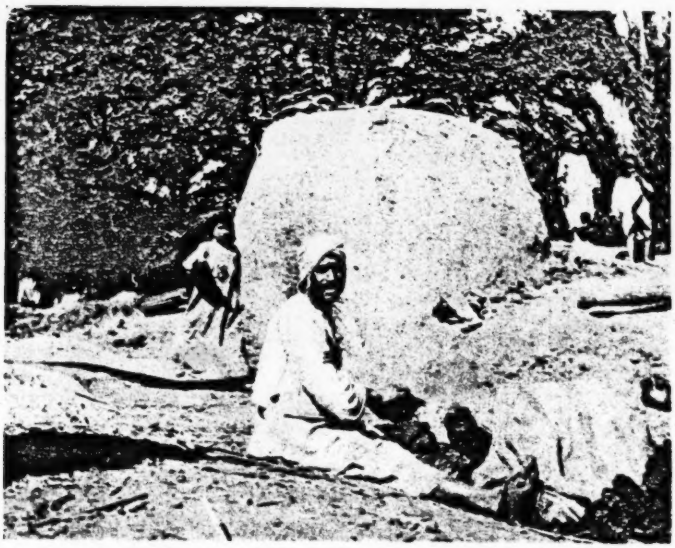
ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥḳ*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥḳ ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with 323
thick sides.

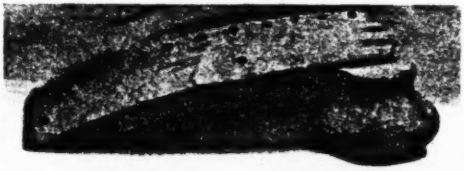
Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the



[291]
[192]
[516]

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.



[413]

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

303
415
516
291
563

FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 Dried maize-stalks (*būṣ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which
322 is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

[531] [291] [415] [516]

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

On another pottery-making site in Fayūm Province which I visited large *ziyār* and pans, as well as *ḳulal* (see p. 151) and other small vessels, are made. Both hand- and wheel-made methods are employed here. The clay used in the manufacture of the larger vessels is obtained from Kīmān Fāris. This clay is soaked in water till it is of the right consistency, then *mūṣ* is mixed with it and well kneaded. The words *mūṣ* and *tibn* both mean finely chopped straw, but the former is so finely chopped that it is more like a powder. This mixture is left to soak for one day in a large hollow in the ground. It is then removed and left piled up in a heap for four days before it is ready for use. Each potter takes a large quantity of this prepared clay and places it conveniently near the spot where he is working, keeping it covered with sacking to prevent further evaporation.

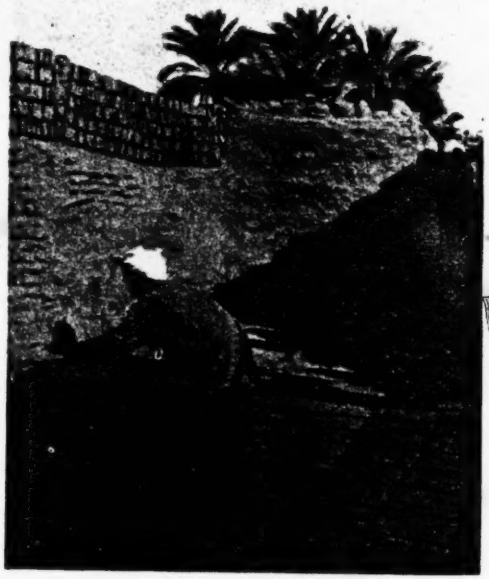


FIG. 76. MAN MAKING TILES

The *ziyār* and large pans are made on the wheel, the former in the manner described earlier in this chapter; they are, however, decorated with simple designs on the upper half of the vessel. This decoration is done with the aid of an implement called a *garūt* (see p. 152, Fig. 80), which consists of a thin, flat piece of iron bent at a right angle at the top.

For making the pans the process is as follows. The revolving table is covered with a thin layer of clay, and on this a thick pillar

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

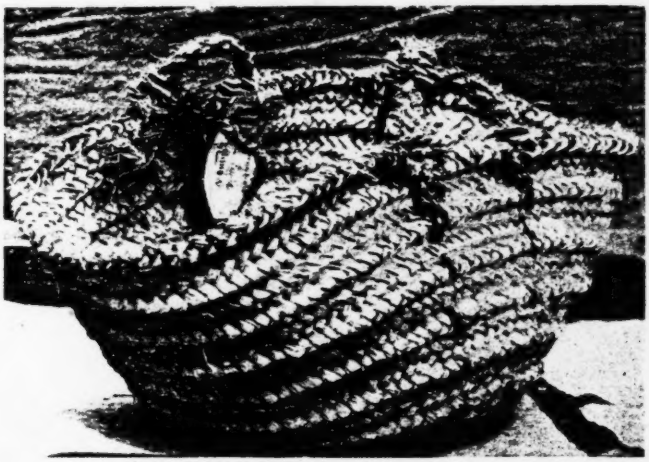


FIG. 83. A MAḲṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not. 142

The *maḳṭaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow 285

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

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857

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 95. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads. 443 516 462 415 [482]

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be 443

[294] [291] [516]

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, [439] in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using [326] for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot 443 on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front [413] of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, de- [294] scribed in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the [534]

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few [217] of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [965] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and 124 from them I have collected and written down a large number of 114 tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by 115 trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (").

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (").

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [415
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) ("), both of

F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.

Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F 782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751]
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the '*omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit

Facing p. 35.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

●516
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Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Mohammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

[p. ii] [p. iii is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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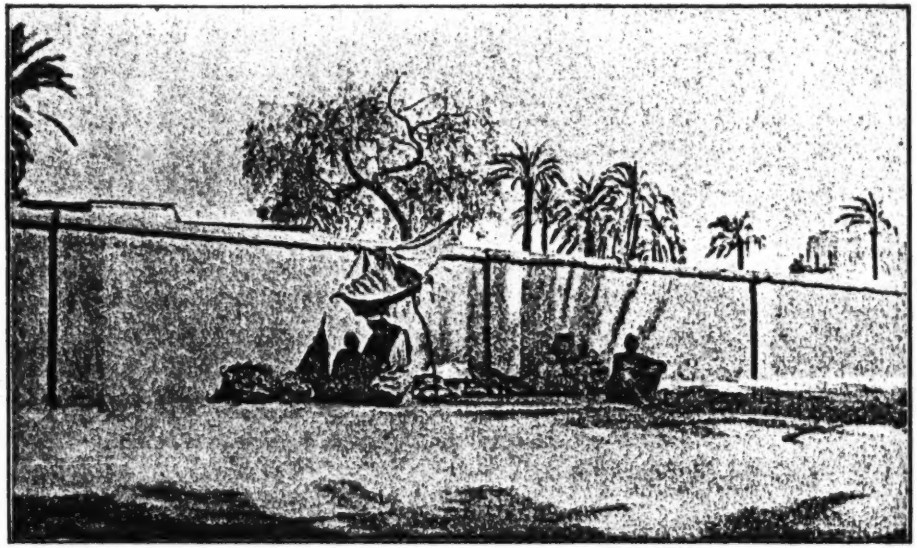

Photograph by L. Borchardt.

A Vegetable-Vender and a Water-Vender in the Village of Giseh.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

[P.154]

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*857 524 The ditty goes on like this: 'Boos, Boos, daughter of Hussain the afflicted, has filled my thoughts at midday (when the sun is hottest). May God fill her thoughts.' The idea is to squeeze a finger of the hand held behind her back while pointing to a particular hole. Thus the two playing girls choose a hole without the other side knowing which one it is. Then the girl whose finger was squeezed hides herself behind the back of her partner, merely by leaning over sideways. The opposite team has three guesses as to the hole chosen. If they guess correctly the turn passes to them. If they do not guess correctly the girl who was hiding reappears to confirm that by showing them the correct hole. The idea of her being separated from her partner is to prevent collusion. In this case, one girl from the successful side spits into one of the 'home' rows of her opponents. The hole is then closed by throwing in some earth. The aim of the game is to close all the holes of the opponents' rows. The first side to do this has won.

*857 A very popular play situation with girls is the representation of some of the adult female occupations and ceremonies. This would involve making straw figures, bedecked in bits of cloth as men or women and children, and with the help of stones, building a house.[1] All the details of an event or ritual are played out in a make-believe way. Thus marriage, circumcision, cooking, and social meetings are all imitated.

524 526 The adult world is almost entirely deprived of organized games. Men play the 'Seega' (No. 19)* only, and on ceremonial occasions 'Hatab', which is a form of fencing played by two persons, each holding a thick stave (nabbout) of about six or seven feet long, each player trying to strike the other on his body. Women have no organized games of any sort, not even those played by the girls.

*857 ● 517 In a sociological analysis of play situations and games it is appropriate to refer to the attitude of adults towards play. The notion of a 'dignified man' as a social ideal, contrasts with that of a man who plays. This reflects the marked dichotomy between the adult world which is considered to be serious, busy and involved in social happenings, and the children's world which, being considered transitory, uneconomic, and even frivolous, is in most cases despised by the sober adults. To describe a grown-up's action as 'childish play' is to condemn it, and such a phrase is highly offensive and might lead to bitter altercation, even blows.

Thus one can hardly find any adult who shows any interest, much less enthusiasm, in children's play and games. Indeed, it would be unbecoming in an adult. If a group of men happens to gather near some children playing, the children immediately realize the situation and have to withdraw somewhere else; otherwise they will expose themselves to a scolding or a missile directed at them. Whatever adults do, is work, for it is only 517 children who play. Yet this does not mean that they have no leisure; they spend it in exchanging news, gossip, tea and coffee drinking and visiting

[1] By the time they reach adolescence girls are expected to have made a sufficient number of dolls to be used as a decoration for their marital homes.

* [The author apparently means No. 18, see category 116, pp. 150-151 -- analyst]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'. 517

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity. 857* [867] [883]

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'. 783 517

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes. 857* [526]

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Eight

CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is important for an understanding of the social and psychological development of children in Silwa, to examine the tales, fables, and other stories transmitted to them from time immemorial.[1] Before embarking on this, however, a few introductory remarks should be made in connection with folk literature in general in this community. Such literature is relatively meagre in both quantity and quality compared with some other non-literate communities. In Silwa at present there are no myths, indigenous legends, and hardly any economic lore as in some primitive communities, all of which attempt to explain the nature of the universe, the history and origin of the people, or transmit traditional knowledge as applied to the solution of economic problems.[2] There is no doubt that, before the advent of Islam, and of Christianity before that, the Ancient Egyptian myths and folk literature must have been the oral code guiding the beliefs and values of folk people in Ancient Egypt. The survival of these is still evident, in spite of Islamic doctrines, in beliefs and ideas about jinn, invisible counterpart (Karina), saints, sacrifice, the evil eye, and so forth.[3] The changes in religious and social attitudes of the people, through becoming part of the Moslem society, have obscured the previously existing system of oral tradition. Perhaps some of its elements still persist in a modified form in the folk tales and children's stories found at present in rural Egypt.

The adult attitude towards children's stories is very similar to their attitude towards children's games, and there is hardly any adult, especially amongst men, who admit that he tells stories to his children. Stories, as seen through the 'puritanic' eyes of adults, are considered to be demonic, and of no practical value. Story-telling is also included in the concept of dissipated leisure (lahw) which such a stoically religious community does

[1] G.P. Lestrade, 'Traditional Literature', in *The Bantu Speaking Tribes*, ed. by I. Schapera, London, 1946.

[2] The full text of the stories is given at the end of this chapter.

[3] See E. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, London, 1926.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

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[519]

not accept as one of the commendable spheres of indulgence in a pious life.[1] While mothers may occasionally tell their children a story at night, fathers could never be expected to do it, as it might encourage that intimacy and levity towards them which is incompatible with the ideal of paternal respect. Story-hearing and telling is a feature of the child and adolescent groups. The writer has not found literate people in Silwa entertaining the reading of novels in the modern sense, as they are regarded 'unreal' and of no immediate value.[2] Children and adolescents must be weaned away as quickly as possible from such imaginative frivolities like story-telling, and acquire the didactic literature of proverbs and wise sayings that enable the boy to cope with the realistic and matter-of-fact affairs of life. The accumulated wisdom of the past, the adults think, is contained in these proverbs and the reported deeds and acts of men of religious or social prestige. They are inordinately fond of quoting proverbs and maxims whenever an occasion for them arises. Rattray has observed the African's predilection for proverbs in his speech: much the same might be said for Silwa. He states that the best retort 'for any new-fangled suggestion or argument, however convincing, is to quote some proverb, however banal and inept, for such a reply is invested with all the force and sanctity of immemorial usage, and therefore conclusive'.[3]

Story-telling also includes the interesting events that happened in the village, or that happened to children. It is a more preferable pastime in winter than in summer, when boys, and occasionally girls, gather at a cosy corner outside the house 'to curtail the long winter nights' as one of the boys put it. On the whole, one can say that a child, on the average, spends an hour a week in these story-telling sessions. But this does not mean that all children take part in these sessions, or know fairy tales and stories. In fact, quite a few children, of both sexes, whom I asked in the compulsory school and in the neighbourhood, knew no stories of any kind. If parents tolerate these story-telling sessions, they do not consider them of any educative value at all.

Children, however, listen to stories and tell them to each other, not in the house or in the presence of the father, but usually outside the house. They will stop their narration on the approach of an adult, and consequently the writer was not able to listen to or observe any of their normal sessions. These sessions are seldom held during the day, as the boys believe that story-telling in daylight brings wrath, like sleeping in the late afternoon (nawmat al asr). Here one sees the functional relationship between children's leisure and their economic responsibilities. Through such beliefs, with their concomitant emotional effects, the scope for flouting responsibility for work is delimited in a roundabout way. Like play, the community

[513]

[1] See Chapter VII for the connection of 'lahw' and play.

[2] There are no novels at all amongst the books that the villagers possess.

[3] R. S. Rattray, 'The African Child in Proverb, Folklore and Fact', in *Africa*, Vol. VI, 1935, p. 426. For some of the proverbs collected in the village, see Appendix VI.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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times the pigeon-houses are painted with simple white designs. This is done, so I was told in one or two villages, because the birds like it, and it draws them back to their own houses! Pigeons are kept chiefly for the sake of the dung, which is considered to be a valuable fertilizer for the fields. Probably, however, more harm than good is done to the crops by the breeding of these birds, for they accumulate in large flocks when the corn is ripening, and are with difficulty dispersed by men and boys armed with slings and stones.

FIG. 6. A VILLAGE HOUSE OF THE BETTER SORT

The houses of the peasants, in many cases mere hovels, are made of crude bricks, sometimes covered over with mud plastering. In the better houses (see Fig. 6) there is generally a flight of steps leading to an upper story, where there may be a sitting-room (*mandareh*), furnished with benches (called *dikak*, singular *dikkeh*), which are covered with rugs and supplied with cushions. The room in which the foodstuffs are kept is also usually in this upper story. The flat roof (Fig. 7) is a pleasant place on which to sit and watch the life in the streets below; it also serves as a hen-run, dog- and cat-run, a drying-ground, and is put to other utilitarian purposes. Here, for example, are stored huge bundles of sticks and dry maize-stalks (called *būṣ*), together with quantities of cakes of cow- and buffalo-dung, neatly stacked in rows, which are used

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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87.

Long Since Decided.

x539
582

Ṭiliḥtĕ fō' es-suṭāḥ
baški-l-hawa lalla.
Le'ēt telāte beyi'ru fi-kalām Alla.
'alû-li: tāḫdi-bnĕ 'ammik?
5 *'ultĕ: la, walla!*
'alû-li: tāḫdi-bnĕ ḫalik?
'ultĕ: šar' Alla!
'alû-li: taḫdi-l-ṛarīb?
ḥafattĕ: bismalla!

I mounted to the roof
And unburdened my love to Allah.
There I found three, who were reading in God's Word.
They said to me: Wilt thou take thy cousin on thy father's side?
5 I said: No, by Allah!
They said to me: Wilt thou take thy cousin on thy mother's side?
I said: No, by Allah's law!
They said to me: Wilt thou take the stranger?
Then I said to myself: In Allah's name!

[517] 1. During the cooler hours of the afternoon and evening, the roofs are much frequented.
3. Three old men.
4. Marriage between relatives is regarded as most natural. Compare No. 96, note on l. 1.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

134.

A Motto.

x539
114
517

When Maḥmûds stock of songs was exhausted, he came once again and dictated to me this song, in praise of the comfortable, dreamy mood, the "kēf", which the Egyptian loves so dearly. He insisted that I should place it as a sort of motto at the beginning of my book; he probably meant before the love-sonnets. (Maḥmûd called a love-song: ṛunet hawa).

Maḥlak, ya kēf,
'and arbab el-ṛarām, maḥlak!
Mašnak, ya kēf,
'and illi ma yidriku ma'nak.

How sweet art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of lovers, how sweet!
How hateful art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of those, who understand not thy meaning!

4. . . . and therefore do not know what to do with thee.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

1:Ammar E,I-5 (1951) 1954
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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment ; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in 743
England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are 758
supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is 177
lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as 164
we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance 181
in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is
low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise
it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and 562
this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, 521
before whom they discuss the most private matters without the 831
slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years
hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most [855]
revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in [577]
such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and
women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in
my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives
with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position
to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who
are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the
most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way
as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage 581
is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the 562
desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. 298
It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the 858
jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn
coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or
outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man.
In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard
it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the
latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian 582
Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages 656
which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbid- 183
ding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen.
However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False 692
ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up 582
the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he 577

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 162
women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is ob- 585
vious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the 581
women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her 164
husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, 562
and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own 836
affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition re- 521
quires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They [833] tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life 581
utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They 833
revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less 837
by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately 548
to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means. 562

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah 562
woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has 581
borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children 185
above everything else. To the wife they mean social pres- 593
tige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of 163
polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her 593
wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A 562
fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 [183]
In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (*)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 ●
mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831
how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524
with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857]
animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684]
fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735
to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183
home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771
beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183
They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771
wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812
It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437
no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (*) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521

In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balālīṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kām?
'Ašara min abu ṭ[illegible]
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḥuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[177] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbâk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḥuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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127.

Disobedient.

539x 521 593

A young wife, against the express command of her husband — very pretty women are kept at home — has gone again at daybreak, to the river, to chat with her former companions, who have come to draw water (see No. 78). Meanwhile sunrise draws nearer and she urges the return home, in order that her husband may not discover her absence.

Ya banāt imlu u-šīlu,
la-n-nahār yiṭla' 'alēye.
Ḫēfe min maḥbūbi yilā'ini,
Sīdi u-mḥarrag 'alēye.

O girls, fill and carry away,
That the day may not surprise me.
I fear, that my beloved may meet me.
He is my master and has forbidden me.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quar-
[574] ters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
512 to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
[539] other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [574] [461] [204] 484 [188] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

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Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusâra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

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796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, 753 796 the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its [776] poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

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REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.[1]

156 The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations. [522] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.[2] The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.[3]

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.[4]

[1] This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

[2] With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand [195] a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Psychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284–302.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

[4] Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

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000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
536 coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

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867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [301] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [524] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

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Chapter Seven

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

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CHILDHOOD is usually equated with play, and in Silwa it is the only period in which play and games are tolerated. Organized games form the major part of children's play life in Silwa. On very few occasions children engage in constructive or imaginative play by making animals, in the case of boys, or pots and jars in the case of girls, or by constructing a whirlwind toy out of paper and a palm-tree branch. Tin lids attached to a long palm-tree stick are sometimes used as wheeled instruments of play.

A child of about eight or nine years spends an average of an hour a day playing games, decreasing gradually as he grows older. Certain games are favourite in winter because of the physical exertion required helping to provide warmth, while others are more favoured in summer. In our following description of games, examples of the former are Nos. 2, 20, 21, 22, which are exclusively winter games, while Nos. 15, 16, 17 are preferred in summer, being sedentary, but could also be played in winter after playing a strenuous game. Some games by their nature are exclusively night games, such as Nos. 10, 11 and 12, especially on moonlit nights.

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There are no fixed times, however, for play, as children can engage in play whenever they gather in a sufficient number for a game. Sometimes one or two children are seen knocking at the doors of friends, calling upon them to join in a game. Here one sees the expression of reciprocity among children. On many occasions I heard a child blaming another for not coming to join him in play and saying, 'Don't you remember, I played with you the other time you asked me. If you don't come with me now, I won't play with you the next time.'

Immediately a group of children have gathered outside their houses they usually start playing a game. It was observed that most of the younger children or older children accompanying the toddlers would play outside their houses, while unaccompanied older children prefer to play in the recognized 'open spaces' at the edge of the village or where there is wide space between the houses.

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A descriptive account of play situations and games will be given, starting with the play of young children and followed by that of the older. 857* 524

Young children, from three to five years, are often taken outside the house by their older brothers and sisters (more often by their sisters) who are expected to look after them. They spend most of their time watching the older children playing, and they tend to ape their movements. One often sees a three-year-old, for instance, jumping about, running from one wall to another, or throwing its hands and feet about in movements similar to those of its elders. They can also be heard trying to reproduce the words and cries uttered by the others during the course of their play. Boys from four to six take great delight in playing the engine game. They line up in one row holding each other by the back. As they go forward with quick pace, they start puffing and whistling and trying to hit those who are in their way. One also sees boys of four and five standing in a row playing the game of 'Who urinates furthest?', or urinating on the sand and watching their urine as it makes a stream of water.[1] This is usually played in the absence of any adult spectators.

This age group accompanied by their older sisters takes great interest in any flight of birds, especially in the case of 'Wad el sheikh'—Ibis—which [825] is supposed to be the fellah's friend, for it eats the worms which harm the soil and the crop. On seeing the birds overhead, the young children will twirl round and round, while their sisters clap their hands or drum rhythmically on pieces of tin. They sing together: 'Oh son of Sheikh. Give me a little loaf. Or I shall tell uncle Omara, who will beat his drum.' The children in their little song are actually asking the birds for help, threatening them, in case of failure, to tell uncle to scare them off.

All the organized games from the age of six are entirely for either boys or girls, for mixing between the two sexes never occurs in such games. In spite of the fact that certain games are preferred by younger boys, while others are played more by older boys, there is always that mingling of children of this age group (six to twelve) to a varying degree. For instance, there would be one or two older boys taking the leading part in a game mostly played by young boys.

1. One of the games which is mainly played by boys between five and eight is called 'The game of the mouse' (Li'abat al-far). A group of boys builds a heap of sand or dust around which they sit. The oldest boy is the leader and remains in control throughout the game. He calls out 'The mouse has entered', at the same time inserting his index finger into the heap, and the others immediately do likewise. When he calls out 'The mouse has come out' everyone must withdraw his finger. Any delay in responding to the leader's instructions exposes the child to hits on the body from his playmates till the leader orders them to stop.

[1] See Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935, pp. 114–23, for children's play connected with the experience of urination and defaecation.

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attempt to catch the boy before the latter reaches a base. If he cannot catch the boy, but secures the striking rope, he returns and places this in front of the 'bride'. The striker cannot be 'home' without his rope and therefore must retrieve this. The 'bridegroom' may not attempt to catch the striker until the latter has touched his striking rope. It is a matter of quickness of eye, and running ability. If the 'bridegroom' catches the striker this time, the latter must take his place. If he does not and the striker reaches 'home' with his striking rope, the 'bridegroom' must reseat himself and the next boy then must advance to strike. 857* 526

14. Another game using a short-length rope is played by a group of boys. All of them stand some distance from a base, and one of their number throws the rope up into the air. Then all the boys scramble to catch hold of it as it falls and the lucky one then turns on the rest to strike whom he can while they are running back to base.

15. A game which involves no physical exertion is called 'Seega with Tab'. The tab is the instrument of scoring, and is made of a palm-tree branch (frond). It is cut a 'span' in length and a 'thumb' wide, one side being green, the other white. Four of these sticks are used in scoring. For playing, two of these sticks are held in each hand, the hands unite to shuffle them, and one hand strikes the sticks on to the other hand to fall on the ground. The scoring depends either on the number of the white sides turned up, one, two, three or four (called an egg), or on all the green sides up, which counts as six. A one must be thrown before scoring can begin, i.e. in the boys' phrase 'One must bring a boy' (a walad). On throwing an opening one the player usually shouts 'This is the boy that thrilled the village' (Walad kharab al balad). In subsequent throws a one allows an extra throw, as also does a four and a six. 857* 524 ●

With the 'tab' a 'seega', a kind of Ludo, is played by making little holes in the ground in four rows of between usually six to ten holes in a row. These holes are called 'eyes' (Oyun). In each eye of the two outermost rows is placed a piece of stone (called dog), say sandstone for one row, and bits of pottery in the other, to distinguish the dogs of each player. One person or more can play on each side. The scoring is with the tab as already outlined. The main object is to 'eat' the opponent's dog according to the moves of the tab. The dogs can be moved only after scoring a one, they then become 'Moslems' after being 'Christians', and thereupon are called 'brothers' instead of dogs. They move along the inner row on the side nearest their home (dar) and then along the inner row on the opposite side, till it secures a place in the opponent's home. The whole crux of the game depends on a piece or pieces in a hole being moved along to a hole occupied by the opponent's piece or pieces; all these latter are thus 'eaten' and are removed from the game. Th[illegible] the one who manages to 'eat up' all his opponent's pieces first is the wi[illegible]

16. Another game scored by the [illegible]ab' sticks is called 'The rule of the whip' (Hukm Kurbag). At least five boys are required to play this game

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properly. These things are necessary for the game: a palm-tree branch (used as a cane), a ring of rope and a very small stick. The player cannot participate in the benefits of the game until he scores a one and the person is thus 'sweetened'. Further scores are: six for a 'Sultan' who holds the ring of rope, four for a 'Minister' (vizir) who holds the cane, and three ones for the small stick.[1] Directly a Sultan and a Minister are scored, the former can command the latter to beat any 'unsweetened' boy with the cane (usually from one to ten strikes on the soles of the feet). The small stick, when it is scored, is the 'stick of mercy' and the holder can lessen any of the Sultan's penalties. As the game continues, the different symbols of command, execution and mercy change hands according to the tab scorings and thus give ample chance for retaliation, conspiracy and altercation.

17. The third game in which scoring is by 'tab' is called 'Burial' (Dafn). It is a simple game for which the participants sit in a circle. Whoever first scores three ones—sometimes the rule is consecutively, at other times cumulatively—buries the tab sticks in the ground. The player who preceded the winner must then attempt to get the sticks out by using his chin to remove the soil and his teeth to extract the sticks. This takes place amidst the jeers and words of humiliation from the whole of the group.

18. Another type of Seega is played without 'tab' scoring, where a square of five rows of five holes (Khimasiyah), or seven rows of seven holes (Sibaiyah) is made on the ground. Each player, in the case of 'Khimasiyah', has twelve 'dogs', each dozen of different material—crockery bits, stone or dried pellets of camel-dung. The players agree on who shall 'throw' first. The first player puts two of his pieces in any two of the holes except the centre hole into which no piece may be put at this stage. The other player follows by putting two of his pieces where he will. In this way both players place their pieces in all the twenty-four holes, and the centre hole is left for the first move, which is played by the last person who placed his pieces. He moves any one of his pieces adjacent to the centre hole, into the centre hole, and his opponent follows by moving any of his pieces adjacent to the vacated hole, into it. The aim is to get pieces in holes immediately adjacent either side of the opponent's piece, whereupon the surrounded piece is 'eaten' and thrown out of play. The winner is the one who is left with three pieces to the opponent's one.

For example, if player 'A' move his (o) dog to the centre hole (as indicated by the lined arrow) he would be able to 'eat' the 1 and 2 (x)s. Player 'B' would then move his dog to the vacated hole (as shown by the dotted arrow) and could eat 3, 4 and 5 (o)s, as he is allowed to return to his former position if he could 'eat' by such a move.

One of the significant features about 'Seega' is that, though it is an individual game, it is usually, whether played by boys or adults, an attraction for a gathering, everybody giving his advice as to the best move. This

[117] [1] A residue of the Ottoman rule in Egypt seems to reflect itself in this game.

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is accepted by the players as part of the enjoyment of the game, for it is held that the 'seega' is not chaste.

X	O	O	X	X
X	O	X[1]	O[3]	O[5]
O	X[2]		O	X
O	O	X	O[4]	X
X	O	X	X	O

19. One rarely passes the village during the day without seeing boys playing the game of 'Awal-Hawal' ('Awal' means first, and 'hawal' means change, though here it is probably a rhyming addition). The game is also called 'First faeces'. There are teams playing with a ball, called 'Jalloud', usually improvised with pieces of old cloth, though sometimes of rubber, and a striking post, which is a piece of stone set up on the ground. One team 'fields' whilst the other team have their 'innings', one at a time. The boy who is 'in' stands with his back to the fielders, and faces the striking post. He throws up the ball and on its descent hits it back behind him. This first hit is called 'Awal' (one). If any of the fielders catch it, the player is out. Otherwise, whoever retrieves it is allowed to aim at the striking post, from where he found the ball. If he strikes the post, the player is out, and another member of his team takes over. If the fielder fails to hit the post, then the player strikes the ball again, saying 'Tani' (second), and so on, if he can, to the third striking called 'Abu' (father). If he succeeds in not being caught out, or the retriever has not hit the post, then he turns his face to the fielders and strikes the ball towards them with his hand. If he succeeds three times in this way in remaining 'in', he kicks the ball towards the fielders—he is allowed three kicks in all, provided he remains 'in'. There are nine possible strikings of the ball by the players who are 'in' to score 'a donkey', or another three added if they want to have 'a donkey ride' on their opponents. In the case of the latter, the two captains do not take part in 'the donkey riding' and play by themselves. The 'ride' of the winning team lasts for as long as their captain is not 'out'. Directly the captain is 'out' the two teams change places. One of the most important rules in this game is the strict observance of the order of striking the ball, and to make a mistake in calling out the sequence is to be declared 'out' by the other team saying 'You are jumped over' (Hub alaik). 857* 526

20. 'Shattat Battat' is a very similar game to 'Awal-Hawal'. It is played

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shelter' (a woman's phrase). Otherwise he has to push up the legs of his 857* 526
'squeezers' and thus by loosening them he can escape.

23. A form of wrestling is indulged in by boys to test each others' strength, or settle an argument. The boys embrace each other, one arm passing round the shoulder; thus, both have an equal hold. The aim is to throw the opponent on his back. Arms in the holding position are only to be used to exert pressure, and legs can be used to trip the opponent to fall on his back. The winner declares his victory by announcing that 'he has brought so-and-so's back to the ground'. This struggle is sometimes the result of a climax in argument and threats, when one challenges the other to 'come outside' for a 'Sirai', so that they can struggle without interference from others.

These are practically all the games played by the boys, and now the 857* girls' games will be described. A typical game for girls is called 'Tugul' 524 (weights), which is similar to 'fivestones' played in Europe, except that in this case 'marbles' are used instead of cubes. The preparation of these little balls entails a good deal of work in shaping and smoothing pieces of sandstone, and sometimes pottery, to about half an inch in diameter. The game is usually an individual game played normally by two girls. The first play is to grasp the five 'marbles' (ten in the case of older girls) in the hand and throw them up in such a way as to intercept their fall on the ground with the back of the hand—the purpose being to scatter the marbles haphazardly. The second play is to throw up one marble, and grasp a second, catching the first as it falls. The caught 'marble' is then put aside and the remaining marbles are to be grasped in the same way during the throwing up of the first marble. The third stage is exactly the same except that two marbles must be picked up at each throw; the fourth stage entails grasping three and then one, at each throw. The final stage is to place the marbles on the back of the hand, to throw them up and grasp them all, while they fall. If at any stage the marble is not grasped, or the thrown one is not caught, or, if in the final stage all the marbles are not caught, the girl loses her turn to the other. When picking a marble, no other marble must be touched.

The game therefore requires a degree of skill and co-ordination, e.g. in the choice of marble to pick up, and in the arrangement of marbles on the back of the hand. It is a game at which girls of ten spend hours, and is enjoyed by both young and older girls. After the game is finished the girls usually dig a hole in the ground to keep their marbles for further play.

The second game is a girls' version of the 'Seega' played by boys, of four rows of four holes, and is played by four girls, two on each side. The two rows nearest each team are their 'home' rows. Two girls sit opposite the other two and one side starts. The girl on the left places her left hand behind her back and grasps the left hand of her partner, who is seated on her right. Thus both girls have their right hands free. The first girl sings a ditty, punctuating the words by putting her index finger in each hole.

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DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*857 The ditty goes on like this: 'Boos, Boos, daughter of Hussain the afflicted,
● 524 has filled my thoughts at midday (when the sun is hottest). May God fill her thoughts.' The idea is to squeeze a finger of the hand held behind her back while pointing to a particular hole. Thus the two playing girls choose a hole without the other side knowing which one it is. Then the girl whose finger was squeezed hides herself behind the back of her partner, merely by leaning over sideways. The opposite team has three guesses as to the hole chosen. If they guess correctly the turn passes to them. If they do not guess correctly the girl who was hiding reappears to confirm that by showing them the correct hole. The idea of her being separated from her partner is to prevent collusion. In this case, one girl from the successful side spits into one of the 'home' rows of her opponents. The hole is then closed by throwing in some earth. The aim of the game is to close all the holes of the opponents' rows. The first side to do this has won.

*857 A very popular play situation with girls is the representation of some of the adult female occupations and ceremonies. This would involve making straw figures, bedecked in bits of cloth as men or women and children, and with the help of stones, building a house.[1] All the details of an event or ritual are played out in a make-believe way. Thus marriage, circumcision, cooking, and social meetings are all imitated.

The adult world is almost entirely deprived of organized games. Men
524 play the 'Seega' (No. 19) only, and on ceremonial occasions 'Hatab',
526 which is a form of fencing played by two persons, each holding a thick stave (nabbout) of about six or seven feet long, each player trying to strike the other on his body. Women have no organized games of any sort, not even those played by the girls.

In a sociological analysis of play situations and games it is appropriate
*857 to refer to the attitude of adults towards play. The notion of a 'dignified
517 man' as a social ideal, contrasts with that of a man who plays. This reflects the marked dichotomy between the adult world which is considered to be serious, busy and involved in social happenings, and the children's world which, being considered transitory, uneconomic, and even frivolous, is in most cases despised by the sober adults. To describe a grown-up's action as 'childish play' is to condemn it, and such a phrase is highly offensive and might lead to bitter altercation, even blows.

Thus one can hardly find any adult who shows any interest, much less enthusiasm, in children's play and games. Indeed, it would be unbecoming in an adult. If a group of men happens to gather near some children playing, the children immediately realize the situation and have to withdraw somewhere else; otherwise they will expose themselves to a scolding or a missile directed at them. Whatever adults do, is work, for it is only
517 children who play. Yet this does not mean that they have no leisure; they spend it in exchanging news, gossip, tea and coffee drinking and visiting

[1] By the time they reach adolescence girls are expected to have made a sufficient number of dolls to be used as a decoration for their marital homes.

* [The author apparently means No. 18, see Category 116, pp. 150-151 -- Analyst]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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is instilled in the child's mind at a very early stage, not only after it knows how to walk confidently, but even as a toddler, when his older sister or brother carries him outside the home to sit or crawl around while others play.

[178] Ali, my informant, commented that children have less scope and time for play than they used to. He added: 'The days of children's play have gone, and nowadays even the suckling has to worry about getting a living.

[841] Since the introduction of perennial irrigation the people have cultivated the land "from the sea to the mountain". Yet they have no "baraka" (blessedness); they have become more greedy and less godly.'[1] The relation between perennial irrigation and the diminishing periods of children's play did not strike the writer as a plausible explanation at first. After further enquiry, however, the real significance became clearer. In the days of 'basin irrigation', with the exception of attending to the water-wheel, most of the irrigation work was done by the grown-ups, as the water was more difficult to obtain and therefore more valuable. At present, actual irrigation of land is mainly the boys' task, as besides the abundance of water, it does not involve more than removing the 'lid' from the opening (siyala) between the canal and the field. Moreover, during basin irrigation very much less manure was needed to fertilize even the same size of land tenure, which meant more time for children's play.

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[525] play is 'Kumar' (betting) which is religiously forbidden. On the other hand, children's play has not felt the impact of urban influences and one cannot find even manufactured dolls in the hands of children.

In the sociological analysis, the emphasis has been chiefly on the part that child play performs in the formation or expression of social attitudes, habits and skills and the ways of acquiring what is in Malinowski's phrase 'the basic grammar of the culture pattern'. Although for certain purposes the social and the psychological approaches can be separated, it is essential in the treatment of play situations to apply both. While one must examine the reflection of social norms in play, one must also consider the manipulation of the psychological forces, e.g. giving vent to aggression or the importance of parent-child relationship, in the process of growing-up as expressed in children's play. With the full realization that neither the social-cognitive, nor the psychological-symbolic significance, is by itself the real meaning of play, the latter aspect will now be discussed.

There are various theories that purport to explain play. Here we are not concerned with identifying ourselves with any of those theories advanced by Herbert Spencer, Stanley Hall, Karl Groos, or Sigmund Freud.

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1:Ammar E,1-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Seven

BOYS' RIDDLES

(mainly in the adolescent stage)

539 524 'One measure of clover covering this world and the hereafter.'
Answer: (Stars.)

'Something which looks like a man's covering which is woven neither by a Moslem nor by a Christian.'
(Loofah.)

'How many cups are in the sea?'
(The sea is that of knowledge and contains four cups which are the four schools of Moslem theology: the schools of Malik, Al Shafii, Abu Hanifa, and Ibn Hanbal.)

'How many "Kintars" are there in the "mountain"?'
(The mountain here is the Koran, so the mountain contains 114 'Kintars', as the Koran consists of 114 chapters.)

'How many "Kasabas"[1] are there in the universe?'
(There are fourteen 'Kasabas' in the universe: seven heavens and seven earths.)

'A tree that contains twelve branches and on every branch there are thirty leaves.'
(The lunar year—in fact, however, the lunar months are of thirty and twenty-nine days alternately.)

'Riding his mother and protected by his father.'
(The bullet in a gun.)

'A cripple who walks, a blind man who sees, a barren person who is pregnant, if she continues to be thirsty she survives, and with her the child she bears, but if she drinks, she dies and with her dies her child.'
(The laden boat at sea.)

'A boy and his sister, and a wife and her husband, amongst whom one distributes three oranges, each one getting a whole orange.'
(The sister of the boy is at the same time the husband's wife.)

'There was a wolf, a ram and some clover, and a man wanted to take

[1] A Kasaba is a length measure of 335 centimetres.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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them across from one side of the river to the other, provided he takes only one of them at a time. How could he manage that without losing any of these things, e.g. letting the wolf eat the ram, or the ram eat the clover?' 539 524

(He takes the ram first to the other bank and leaves it there. Then takes the wolf, leaving it there, taking the ram back with him to where it was. Then takes the clover across to the other side, leaving it beside the wolf, and returning to fetch the ram.)

'Our white camel scatters its feeding-stuff,
Our black camel gathers its feeding-stuff.'

(White camel is daytime when people disperse for work, whereas the black camel represents night when people gather for chatting.)

'The land is white, the sowing seeds are black, the cows are five, and the plough is one.'

(This is a representation of the hand (five fingers) writing in ink (black sowing seeds) with a pen (one plough) on a white sheet of paper (white land).)

'A boy with scabies rubs his head on another scabby head, and from too much rubbing the heads fall down piece by piece.'

(The upper and lower stones of a handmill grinding flour.)

'Ninety knights who run in one vessel.'

(The two wheels of the water-wheel, the upper horizontal wheel containing fifty teeth, and the lower vertical one containing forty, and both being in the well.)

'A white billy-goat, with red ears.'

(The 'maktaf' (basket) made of whitish palm-tree leaves, with two handles made of brownish palm-tree fibre.)

'Shakes his head while filling his belly.'

(The spindle.)

'Abuyah kitir malu
'ala akhti katabnalu
al bit jabat walad ya zein af'alu
baga abuyah,[1] wibn akhti wana khalu.'
'Abuyah has plenty of money.
We've got him wed to my sister.
She had a child, who's done himself well.
He's the brother of Yah (Akhuyah), he's my cousin and I'm his maternal uncle.'

(Here the play is on the words Abuyah (first line) and Akhuyah (fourth line), where the former word means 'Father of Yah' and 'my father' and the latter word means 'brother of Yah' and 'my brother'.)

[1] [apparently this should read Akhuyah --analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of [171]
Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

[794]
[292]
[708]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
253 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is nó peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12) C F 796 527

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
sîga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([41]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183] ignorance and tyranny. (69)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831 how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524 with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857] animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684] fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735 to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183 home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771 beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183 They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771 wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812 It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437 no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (70) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five 747
young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (*). 872
"Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village.

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's [757]
and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist. On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash.

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but [524]
it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules."

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, 747
and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth 846 852 into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his 553 mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only 551 personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This [178] custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among [582] themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with 846 the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured 852 over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is [801] a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and [783] mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or 527 a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and [524] other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a [779]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[179] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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Chapter Seven

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

*859 524 CHILDHOOD is usually equated with play, and in Silwa it is the only period in which play and games are tolerated. Organized games form the major part of children's play life in Silwa. On very few occasions children engage in constructive or imaginative play by making animals, in the case of boys, or pots and jars in the case of girls, or by constructing a whirlwind toy out of paper and a palm-tree branch. Tin lids attached to a long palm-tree stick are sometimes used as wheeled instruments of play.

A child of about eight or nine years spends an average of an hour a day playing games, decreasing gradually as he grows older. Certain games are [526] favourite in winter because of the physical exertion required helping to provide warmth, while others are more favoured in summer. In our following description of games, examples of the former are Nos. 2, 20, 21, 22, which are exclusively winter games, while Nos. 15, 16, 17 are preferred in summer, being sedentary, but could also be played in winter after playing a strenuous game. Some games by their nature are exclusively night games, such as Nos. 10, 11 and 12, especially on moonlit nights.

There are no fixed times, however, for play, as children can engage in play whenever they gather in a sufficient number for a game. Sometimes one or two children are seen knocking at the doors of friends, calling upon them to join in a game. Here one sees the expression of reciprocity among children. On many occasions I heard a child blaming another for not coming to join him in play and saying, 'Don't you remember, I played with you the other time you asked me. If you don't come with me now, I won't play with you the next time.'

Immediately a group of children have gathered outside their houses they usually start playing a game. It was observed that most of the younger children or older children accompanying the toddlers would play outside their houses, while unaccompanied older children prefer to play in the recognized 'open spaces' at the edge of the village or where there is wide space between the houses.

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2. Another game for the same age group is called 'Shalal-balal'.[1] This is played with two equal teams of three to five members each, each team having a prefect, 'arif', who is usually the eldest boy. The prefects stand beside each other at what may be called a base, whilst the two teams stand intermingled at a distance from them. The prefects take turns in throwing up or away in any direction a small object, usually a bone. This 'bone of contention' must be retrieved by one of the players and returned to his team-prefect at the base. The game involves brute strength as well as cunning, for if any boy can obtain the bone surreptitiously amid the general scramble, he must cunningly shake off suspicion and rapidly reach his prefect. Otherwise the scramble continues, and the bone is fought out with struggle and chase. The winner's side calls out 'Fikum Humar', which scoffingly means 'That's a donkey for you'.

3. Another game of mixed ages is called 'The Buffalo's little horn' (Kurain al gamoosee). A younger boy is slung over the shoulders of an older boy so that his trunk hangs down freely behind the latter, while his knees flex over each shoulder and his legs are crossed over the chest of the older boy. The feet are held rigidly by the older boy to perform a butting and buffeting movement representing the little horns of the buffalo. Three or four couples are so made up. The struggle begins amidst challenging shouting of 'the buffalo's little horn' usually between two parties, the object being to dislodge the crossed legs and so cause 'the buffalo' to slip down. The 'horns' are thus destroyed and the two players so dealt with drop out of the game. The remaining couple resumes its attack on other survivors and so on until one couple is left as victor.

4. A similar game played by mixed ages is called 'Donkey's ride' (Rokoub Hamir). In this case a younger boy straddles the shoulders of an older boy, who holds the rider's dangling legs securely with his hands. The object of this game is to unseat the opponent by dragging or pulling him off his mount. This, however, rarely occurs, as the struggle between the riders usually takes the form of buffeting, pulling and pushing. Actual striking or slapping is not allowed. Although the younger boys seem to be the more active participants in the game yet the older boys can naturally assist in the struggle by manœuvring their positions to help their riders.

5. 'The water-carrier fight' (Harb al Sakka) is so called because the older boys carry the smaller boys slung across the small of their backs, grasping them firmly to themselves, similar to the way in which the water-skin is slung behind the water-vendor. The protruding legs are free to kick and to hit the opponents' free legs. The aim here, as before, is to dislodge 'the water-skin' from the back of 'the water-carrier'.

6. The combination of old and young boys also takes the form of a race. The older boy stands putting his arms behind his back, clasping his hands together, while the smaller boy stands with his feet on the former's hands. A line of these couples race towards the goal shouting out: 'This is the tall

[1] The two words have no apparent meaning and they are put together just to rhyme.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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palm tree that extends from here to the island' (Al nakhla attawili, min hina lil jaziri).

7. One of their favourite games is for two boys to stand side by side linking the near hands, and for a third boy to crook a leg over the joined arms and place his hand on the near shoulder of each of the other two boys. As they advance at walking pace, he hops on his one leg, then sings 'The lame cock jumps over the hen' (Arag arroug, nat al faroug), as they quicken their pace. Races can be run in this way, having teams of three.

From the age of nine and ten till thirteen and fourteen years boys play more complicated games which are, on the whole, tougher and require more muscular skill, lasting longer.

8. For instance, a boy stands facing a wall, leaning forward with his palms flat to support him, his legs apart. Another stands behind him grasping him round the waist, another stands behind this latter grasping him similarly, and so forth for as many as are playing. The last one, however, is the active player in the game. His task is to detach each member, one by one, from the chain. This he must do by grasping the last member by both legs and pulling him how he will until he has detached the person in question, dragging him away to a base. Then he returns to tackle the next victim and so on. When he has finished this, another member is dragged till the chain, thus disconnected, is reformed to start again.

9. The game of 'Drag him, bring him along' is an interesting game for this age group. The boys are divided into two teams of equal numbers, and face each other on either side of a line drawn on the ground. Each boy grasps his opposite number by the right hand, across the line. The aim is to pull the opponent over the line of demarcation towards one's own side. Directly one member has done this, two boys, one from each side, are chosen to spit on the sand, and the loser, bending over with his hands on the ground, is slapped on the buttocks by all members of the other side. This continues until the two boys declare that the spit has gone dry. If, however, the victim wishes to curtail his punishment he must say 'I am a woman', whereupon the beating ceases, and the teams line up again and resume the struggle. A confession of 'womanhood' by a boy of one side is a point scored for the other.

10. There are also various versions of hide-and-seek. The well-known type is where one hides and the rest search him out while singing in chorus:

At-talab fat fat
  The fox passed, passed
wif-dailo saba laffat
  and in his tail there are seven knots.

A variation of this is called 'Policemen and thieves' with two teams, where each member of one team (the constables) must search out his opposite number in the other team (the thieves). Having found him, the searcher

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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*[85] must bring him to the base, often a task which entails struggle and strategy. After all the thieves have been rounded up, the teams change places, and the game goes on.

11. On moonlit nights the following game called 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' (Meennattak y kwaidees) is played with great zest. Two boys are chosen by turns, one to bend over on to all fours placing his head between the knees of the other facing him. The former's eyes are covered by the latter's hands, so that he cannot see. The other boys jump in turn over the crouching boy, who at each jump is asked by his partner by saying 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' If he guesses correctly, he can immediately change places with the jumper. If, however, he does not guess any of the names, the boys disperse after secretly informing the partner where they will hide, and the crouching boy must then guess where each one has hidden. A correct guess will merely bring back the boy whose place was correctly guessed from his hiding place, but inability to guess will mean that the hiding boy must be carried back to base.

12. 'The hidden heaps' (Kwaimat ad-das) is also a game played preferably on a moonlit night, with as many boys as possible joining in, as it is, *par excellence*, a game of the crowd. Two senior boys are chosen as leaders and the other boys pair up. The pairs decide on names beyond the leaders' hearing; one is wheat, the other barley, one is horse, the other donkey, and so on. They return to the leaders who alternately are given two such agreed names to choose from, and thus the two teams are formed. The leaders and their teams then set off in opposite directions, each team agreeing on the limits of an area to be covered. The aim is to make little heaps of sand or earth in out-of-the-way places, so unobtrusive that some effort must be made to discover them. The first team to return begins to make a noise, shouting, howling or calling, so that the other team shall return. Then both teams set off into the other's territory, to destroy as many of the heaps as they can find. On their way they sing:

Sharrag, gharrab, ya liamoon,
In the east, in the west, there are lemons,
[533] Bahhar, ghabbal, ya liamoon.
In the north, in the south, there are lemons.

Then at last both teams meet again, and there is a check by each leader of the other team's work. This necessitates visits afterwards to both areas by both teams, and the heaps still left undestroyed on both sides are totalled up, the winning team having a balance of undestroyed heaps in their favour.

13. 'The little rope' (Hibail) is played with two boys seated on the ground facing each other, holding a rope tautly between them. One is called the 'Bridegroom', the other the 'Bride'. The other boys take turns to approach the 'bridegroom' and strike him with a small rope or a turban end. Then, and not before, the 'bridegroom' drops his rope and makes every

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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attempt to catch the boy before the latter reaches a base. If he cannot catch the boy, but secures the striking rope, he returns and places this in front of the 'bride'. The striker cannot be 'home' without his rope and therefore must retrieve this. The 'bridegroom' may not attempt to catch the striker until the latter has touched his striking rope. It is a matter of quickness of eye, and running ability. If the 'bridegroom' catches the striker this time, the latter must take his place. If he does not and the striker reaches 'home' with his striking rope, the 'bridegroom' must reseat himself and the next boy then must advance to strike. 857* 526

14. Another game using a short-length rope is played by a group of boys. All of them stand some distance from a base, and one of their number throws the rope up into the air. Then all the boys scramble to catch hold of it as it falls and the lucky one then turns on the rest to strike whom he can while they are running back to base.

15. A game which involves no physical exertion is called 'Seega with Tab'. The tab is the instrument of scoring, and is made of a palm-tree branch (frond). It is cut a 'span' in length and a 'thumb' wide, one side being green, the other white. Four of these sticks are used in scoring. For playing, two of these sticks are held in each hand, the hands unite to shuffle them, and one hand strikes the sticks on to the other hand to fall on the ground. The scoring depends either on the number of the white sides turned up, one, two, three or four (called an egg), or on all the green sides up, which counts as six. A one must be thrown before scoring can begin, i.e. in the boys' phrase 'One must bring a boy' (a walad). On throwing an opening one the player usually shouts 'This is the boy that thrilled the village' (Walad kharab al balad). In subsequent throws a one allows an extra throw, as also does a four and a six. 857* 524

With the 'tab' a 'seega', a kind of Ludo, is played by making little holes in the ground in four rows of between usually six to ten holes in a row. These holes are called 'eyes' (Oyun). In each eye of the two outermost rows is placed a piece of stone (called dog), say sandstone for one row, and bits of pottery in the other, to distinguish the dogs of each player. One person or more can play on each side. The scoring is with the tab as already outlined. The main object is to 'eat' the opponent's dog according to the moves of the tab. The dogs can be moved only after scoring a one, they then become 'Moslems' after being 'Christians', and thereupon are called 'brothers' instead of dogs. They move along the inner row on the side nearest their home (dar) and then along the inner row on the opposite side, till it secures a place in the opponent's home. The whole crux of the game depends on a piece or pieces in a hole being moved along to a hole occupied by the opponent's piece or pieces; all these latter are thus 'eaten' and are removed from the game. Thus the one who manages to 'eat up' all his opponent's pieces first is the winner.

16. Another game scored by the 'tab' sticks is called 'The rule of the whip' (Hukm Kurbag). At least five boys are required to play this game

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is accepted by the players as part of the enjoyment of the game, for it is held that the 'seega' is not chaste. 857* 524

X	O	O	X	X
X	O	X[1]	O[3]	O[5]
O	X[2]		O	X
O	O	X	O[4]	X
X	O	X	X	O

19. One rarely passes the village during the day without seeing boys playing the game of 'Awal-Hawal' ('Awal' means first, and 'hawal' means change, though here it is probably a rhyming addition). The game is also called 'First faeces'. There are teams playing with a ball, called 'Jalloud', usually improvised with pieces of old cloth, though sometimes of rubber, and a striking post, which is a piece of stone set up on the ground. One team 'fields' whilst the other team have their 'innings', one at a time. The boy who is 'in' stands with his back to the fielders, and faces the striking post. He throws up the ball and on its descent hits it back behind him. This first hit is called 'Awal' (one). If any of the fielders catch it, the player is out. Otherwise, whoever retrieves it is allowed to aim at the striking post, from where he found the ball. If he strikes the post, the player is out, and another member of his team takes over. If the fielder fails to hit the post, then the player strikes the ball again, saying 'Tani' (second), and so on, if he can, to the third striking called 'Abu' (father). If he succeeds in not being caught out, or the retriever has not hit the post, then he turns his face to the fielders and strikes the ball towards them with his hand. If he succeeds three times in this way in remaining 'in', he kicks the ball towards the fielders—he is allowed three kicks in all, provided he remains 'in'. There are nine possible strikings of the ball by the players who are 'in' to score 'a donkey', or another three added if they want to have 'a donkey ride' on their opponents. In the case of the latter, the two captains do not take part in 'the donkey riding' and play by themselves. The 'ride' of the winning team lasts for as long as their captain is not 'out'. Directly the captain is 'out' the two teams change places. One of the most important rules in this game is the strict observance of the order of striking the ball, and to make a mistake in calling out the sequence is to be declared 'out' by the other team saying 'You are jumped over' (Hub alaik). 857* 526 ●

20. 'Shattat Battat' is a very similar game to 'Awal-Hawal'. It is played

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with two sticks, one a yard, the other six inches, in length. The teams pair up, one having innings, the other fielding. A hole is dug in the ground and the smaller stick is laid across the hole. The first player strikes this smaller stick into the air by lifting it smartly with the longer stick. If the stick is not caught, whereupon the player is out, the fielder aims it at the hole where it must either hit the stick or fall into the hole, and the player is then out. Assuming that there is no catch or successful aim, the player then proceeds to build a small heap of earth on which he places the little stick sloping with the upper end free. He then strikes this upper end down, the stick flies up and he strikes it again as hard as possible. It is now a question of catching, otherwise wherever the stick falls, another heap is made and the little stick is struck again for as many as twelve times in all. If no catch has been made, the losing team must carry the winners, with the exception of the leaders who walk back to the base.

21. 'Shad' is also another absorbing game for the boys, especially the adolescents.[1] It requires a large open space, and consists of two teams made up by pairing with the usual procedure. The boys usually strip to the waist, keeping only their pants with turban strips tied round the waist. The two teams face each other in a row, each boy holding his right foot up behind him with his left hand. In their initial struggle the team that is 'in', 'hides' a member, who plays the 'bride', and he does not begin to play until later. The teams advance on each other, hopping along, the aim being to jostle, push, shove, pull, using only the flexed knee and the free hand, although charging is included. In this free fight the object is to knock over the opponent, who is 'out' if he lets his foot slip from his hand or falls on the ground. If the 'bride's' team is left with one or more against an empty field, then the 'bride is safe', and the game is won. If a few of the opposing team, or even one, survive, having vanquished all the 'bride's' team, the 'bride' then has to face those opponents, her job being to hop off to a goal without actually being engaged in any fight with the opposing hoppers. As dodging, speed, and nimbleness are required from the 'bride', it is usually the fastest player who is selected as 'bride'. If the 'bride' reaches 'home' safely—that side has won; if she is unsuccessful, the other side changes place, and chooses its own 'bride' to resume the game.

22. Another hopping game, this time without teams, is played by three boys at least. Two boys sit facing each other, their legs extended so that their feet touch each other, their legs forming a diamond shape. The third boy holds his right leg behind with his hand as in the 'Shad' game. Then follows a series of hopping feats of ever-increasing difficulty, where the two boys make him hop over them higher and wider at every turn. In hopping he must not touch any part of them with his foot or leg. The penalty is that he lies prone between their legs and is squeezed. From this the game has derived its name 'To be squeezed' (Kammatat). To release himself the victim must confess 'he is a woman' or say that 'he is in God's

[1] 'Shad' means 'Tighten yourself'.

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shelter' (a woman's phrase). Otherwise he has to push up the legs of his 857* 526
'squeezers' and thus by loosening them he can escape.

23. A form of wrestling is indulged in by boys to test each others' strength, or settle an argument. The boys embrace each other, one arm passing round the shoulder; thus, both have an equal hold. The aim is to throw the opponent on his back. Arms in the holding position are only to be used to exert pressure, and legs can be used to trip the opponent to fall on his back. The winner declares his victory by announcing that 'he has brought so-and-so's back to the ground'. This struggle is sometimes the result of a climax in argument and threats, when one challenges the other to 'come outside' for a 'Sirai', so that they can struggle without interference from others.

These are practically all the games played by the boys, and now the 857* girls' games will be described. A typical game for girls is called 'Tugul' 526
(weights), which is similar to 'fivestones' played in Europe, except that in this case 'marbles' are used instead of cubes. The preparation of these little balls entails a good deal of work in shaping and smoothing pieces of sandstone, and sometimes pottery, to about half an inch in diameter. The game is usually an individual game played normally by two girls. The first play is to grasp the five 'marbles' (ten in the case of older girls) in the hand and throw them up in such a way as to intercept their fall on the ground with the back of the hand—the purpose being to scatter the marbles haphazardly. The second play is to throw up one marble, and grasp a second, catching the first as it falls. The caught 'marble' is then put aside and the remaining marbles are to be grasped in the same way during the throwing up of the first marble. The third stage is exactly the same except that two marbles must be picked up at each throw; the fourth stage entails grasping three and then one, at each throw. The final stage is to place the marbles on the back of the hand, to throw them up and grasp them all, while they fall. If at any stage the marble is not grasped, or the thrown one is not caught, or, if in the final stage all the marbles are not caught, the girl loses her turn to the other. When picking a marble, no other marble must be touched.

The game therefore requires a degree of skill and co-ordination, e.g. in the choice of marble to pick up, and in the arrangement of marbles on the back of the hand. It is a game at which girls of ten spend hours, and is enjoyed by both young and older girls. After the game is finished the girls usually dig a hole in the ground to keep their marbles for further play.

The second game is a girls' version of the 'Seega' played by boys, of four rows of four holes, and is played by four girls, two on each side. The two rows nearest each team are their 'home' rows. Two girls sit opposite the other two and one side starts. The girl on the left places her left hand behind her back and grasps the left hand of her partner, who is seated on her right. Thus both girls have their right hands free. The first girl sings a ditty, punctuating the words by putting her index finger in each hole.

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*857 524 The ditty goes on like this: 'Boos, Boos, daughter of Hussain the afflicted, has filled my thoughts at midday (when the sun is hottest). May God fill her thoughts.' The idea is to squeeze a finger of the hand held behind her back while pointing to a particular hole. Thus the two playing girls choose a hole without the other side knowing which one it is. Then the girl whose finger was squeezed hides herself behind the back of her partner, merely by leaning over sideways. The opposite team has three guesses as to the hole chosen. If they guess correctly the turn passes to them. If they do not guess correctly the girl who was hiding reappears to confirm that by showing them the correct hole. The idea of her being separated from her partner is to prevent collusion. In this case, one girl from the successful side spits into one of the 'home' rows of her opponents. The hole is then closed by throwing in some earth. The aim of the game is to close all the holes of the opponents' rows. The first side to do this has won.

*857 A very popular play situation with girls is the representation of some of the adult female occupations and ceremonies. This would involve making straw figures, bedecked in bits of cloth as men or women and children, and with the help of stones, building a house.[1] All the details of an event or ritual are played out in a make-believe way. Thus marriage, circumcision, cooking, and social meetings are all imitated.

524 The adult world is almost entirely deprived of organized games. Men play the 'Seega' (No. 19) only, and on ceremonial occasions 'Hatab', ● 526 which is a form of fencing played by two persons, each holding a thick stave (nabbout) of about six or seven feet long, each player trying to strike the other on his body. Women have no organized games of any sort, not even those played by the girls.

*857 517 In a sociological analysis of play situations and games it is appropriate to refer to the attitude of adults towards play. The notion of a 'dignified man' as a social ideal, contrasts with that of a man who plays. This reflects the marked dichotomy between the adult world which is considered to be serious, busy and involved in social happenings, and the children's world which, being considered transitory, uneconomic, and even frivolous, is in most cases despised by the sober adults. To describe a grown-up's action as 'childish play' is to condemn it, and such a phrase is highly offensive and might lead to bitter altercation, even blows.

Thus one can hardly find any adult who shows any interest, much less enthusiasm, in children's play and games. Indeed, it would be unbecoming in an adult. If a group of men happens to gather near some children playing, the children immediately realize the situation and have to withdraw somewhere else; otherwise they will expose themselves to a scolding or a missile directed at them. Whatever adults do, is work, for it is only 517 children who play. Yet this does not mean that they have no leisure; they spend it in exchanging news, gossip, tea and coffee drinking and visiting

[1] By the time they reach adolescence girls are expected to have made a sufficient number of dolls to be used as a decoration for their marital homes.

* [The author apparently means No. 18, see category 116, pp. 150-151--analyst]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'. 519

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity. 857* [867] [883]

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'. 783 519

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes. 857* [506]

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

E C [778]

E C [133]

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

E 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [443] [527]

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39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fallaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

796 [178] [535] [186] [272] [443] [182]

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

526 796 [492]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath [796]
of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this [778]
day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye- [826]
powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, [757]
a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the [789]
coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusâra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, [574]
the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring [805]
festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed- [788]
cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of [943]
coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces [252]
and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent [521] [526]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

753 796 [776]

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and [782] when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I [465] believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the [789] house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a considerable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of [554] honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [072] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 264.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([10]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (")

F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again.

F

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support.

533 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *summara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard.

F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence.

F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found.

F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (")

c F 796 527

527 Sometimes, as at Shemm el Nessim[44], the feast of Spring, the faithful of both religions mingle in the same holiday and the same rejoicings. The ceremonies may last several days. Formless processions pass, with banners floating in the wind. Arabs come to show off their horsemanship; swings and roundabouts are set up for the children. A thousand booths are arranged in the open air, for the sale of sugar dolls, sweet sesame, roast peas and monkey nuts[45]. The crowd laughs, sings, and makes merry, spending in a single day the savings of a whole year and living only for the moment.

[143]

443 437 At the market too there is a crowd. The market is a piece of waste land, sometimes enclosed, outside the bigger villages. The Egyptian Markets Company has established 123 country markets, which may be recognised by their iron railings, in such towns as Mehalla, Embaba, and Tahta. They take a toll of one or two piastres from each seller.

The market is usually held once a week and lasts from dawn to midday. The sellers, men and women, make their way to it at daybreak in long files, choose a spot to lay out their wares, and squat down behind them to wait for customers. Buyers soon appear from all the surrounding villages, and then all is a noisy, confused mêlée of men, cattle and goods.

Piece-goods and hardware are sold by professional merchants who come from the chief town or are going the round of the villages. These merchants get their stock from the wholesalers in the cities. But vegetables, poultry, butter and eggs are sold by the fellah himself, or rather by the fellah's wife, who is a better hand at bargaining. When forced to do so, the fellah brings his *gamoossa* or goat to the market for sale.

432 435 The buyers are other fellaheen who need manufactured goods or foodstuffs which they cannot produce themselves. For two piastres they can replace a broken waterpot (*ballas*) or a worn-out basket. Eight piastres will buy a big pair of drawers, and five a shirt. A *gallabiya* may be had for twenty piastres, and for thirty a *milaya*, or woman's veil. Better qualities are on sale for the *'omda* or for a villager who has done good business. A *gallabiya* or a *milaya* worth 100 piastres — that is something for a man or woman to be proud of.

 [10.(54).- Analyst]

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrizi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 578 754

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS. Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand. E F 113

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages. F [584]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14. F [162 872]

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.) E F [796 527]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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F 113

See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192]

63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171]

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443] 186

68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [75 346]

69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191

72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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113 78. 'Aly Shamsy Pasha, Speech in the Chamber, December 1939.

79. A Village Summer School, article in The Social Workers' Bulletin, May 1938.

80. 'Abdul-Halim Abu-Seif Radi, 7.4.1941.

81. Apostolic Letter to the Mexican Bishops, 28.3.1937; section on the peasantry.

795 796 527 82. The fasting month of Ramadan is succeeded by the month of Shawwal, the first three days of which are a great public holiday, the Lesser Bairam. About two months later comes the other great holiday, the four days of the Great Bairam.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

ʿĒb ʿalēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

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[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband ʿAli, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages, will have often seen this picture.

ʿAli, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast: for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl ʿAli u-Moḥammadī
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-ʿaginha ʾuddāmha.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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5 *Raḥet tekubbĕ-trabha*
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha.
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [291]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyūṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyūṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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22.

Swing-Song.

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This song is said to be sung by girls, as they swing at the "great feast". They are teasing friends who are standing near.

The "great feast" (ʿid el-kebîr) also designated by the Turkish name Korbân Beirâm, is celebrated about two months and a half after the more important "little feast", which ends the holy fast-month Ramaḍân. At the time of the "great feast", even the poorest must have a piece of meat, for it is celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. [796]

Like all feasts, the "great feast" is celebrated with much noise and merriment. Swings are rarely lacking at the place of the feast.

Ya ḫai, rîḥet ḥudâmak
zêi kaḥk el-ʿid,
maʿgûm-bi-šêbe u-kafûra
u-samnê gedîd.

Brother, the odor of thy garments
Is like feast-cakes,
Kneaded with wormwood and camphor
And fresh fat.

3. Such strange spices as wormwood and camphor are actually baked in these sweet feast-cakes, which are general favorites (compare No. 20, l. 9). Camphor is put, for instance, into coffee. [263]

[P 24 is blank]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for in- [171]
stance, that of Hermes on the 19th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [176]
away the *barina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [153]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tre-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth 846
into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his 852
mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well 553
known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For 551
distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This [178]
custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among [582]
themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with 846
the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured 852
over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is [801]
a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and [983]
mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or 527
a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and [524]
other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a [999]

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527 524 [179] [273] trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 [533] [535] Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured [354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number 527 535 [292] [301] of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The 533 534 527 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground; some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

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[534]

Dancing girl.

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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters

[534]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Fereiha*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *ghawâzi* or male dancer is not much
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9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533] while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534] under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838] the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *khatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 799
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosuf*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

"She (the loved one) has made me a cup
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the depredations of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *ziker* was taking place under the shade
796 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
788 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this
769 religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *felláḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

TATTOOING IS ANOTHER FORM OF PERSONAL DECORATION. IT IS MADE

with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ghāl ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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304 463 531 under which he squats, so that his clients can choose whatever pattern or patterns they prefer. Some are very elaborate, and must involve considerable suffering on the part of the person who is tattooed with them. Many of the patterns are conventional designs, and I am assured that they have no special meaning, but are chosen according to individual taste and fancy. One pattern is called *esh-shagareh* (the tree), and is the one usually chosen by both men and women to decorate the back of the right hand. So far as I have observed, this pattern when used by women differs slightly from that used by men. The drawing given here (Fig. 21) I made from the hand of a woman; the marks were tattooed on her hand when she was a young girl.

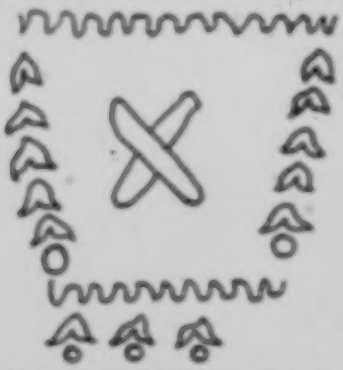

FIG. 21. TATTOO MARKS ON THE BACK OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT HAND AND ACROSS THE BACK OF THE WRIST

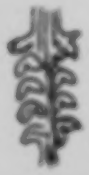

FIG. 22. TATTOO MARK FROM EDGE OF LOWER LIP TO BASE OF CHIN

304 531 The women are usually tattooed from the edge of the lower lip down to the base of the chin. The pattern shown in Fig. 22, copied by me from the same woman, is also called *esh-shagareh*. The tattoo on the back of the hand and wrist, as well as on the fingers and thumb, is said to make them strong.

FIG. 23. TATTOO MARKS ON WOMAN'S FINGERS TO MAKE THEM STRONG

FIG. 24. TATTOO MARKS ON THUMB BELOW THE SECOND JOINT TO MAKE THE THUMB STRONG

304 A boy is often tattooed with a single dot on his chin and another near his right nostril; also most boys have three dots, thus ∴, tattooed on one arm, just above the wrist. Boys are tattooed in

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F [304] believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḫarīneh*, seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḫrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḫarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 756 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *'afrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his F [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *felläḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view the sign of their religion.

F C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḫarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered.

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out.

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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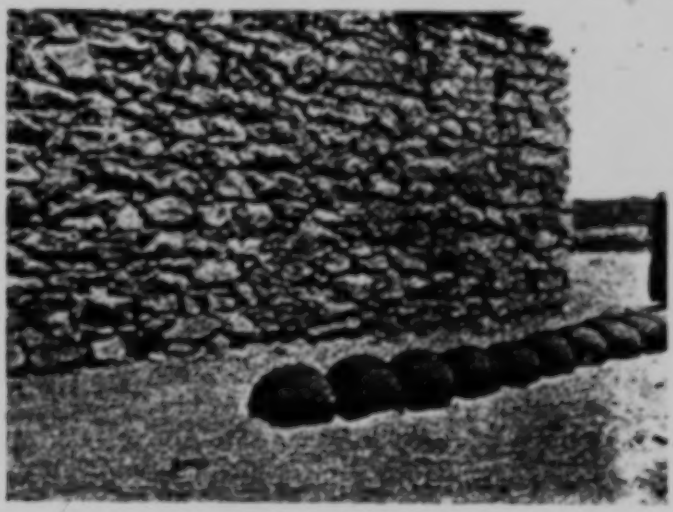
should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

323 the vessels; otherwise the pots would crack while being baked in the kiln.

When the pots have thus been dried in the sun they are handed over to a woman, who takes each one in turn and smooths the base of the vessel with a knife, cutting off the superfluous clay. The pots are then returned to the disks and left to sun-bake again for two or three days. They are then passed on to another woman, who paints them all over with a slip (Fig. 73). This is made of [386] powdered *ṭafl* (a yellow clay) mixed with water. The pots are

[291]

FIG. 72. THE POTTER MAKING HIS WHEEL REVOLVE

now left to dry for ten minutes or so, when they are passed on to another set of women and girls, who polish them both inside and out with a smooth pebble of basalt (Fig. 74 and p. 152, Fig. 80). When this process is completed they are handed on to a woman [533] artist, who paints them all over with simple designs (Fig. 75). The [386] paint, which is made of a material called *mughrek* (red ochre), pounded up and mixed with water, is applied with a feather. The designs are freehand, and are put on very rapidly, without any pattern to work from.

The pots are now ready for the kiln, where they are fired as soon as the oven is ready for them, but they can be put on one side for a short time without any detriment if the preparation of the kiln is not complete.

[Text continues on p. 148]

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

323 Dried maize-stalks (*ḥaṭ*) are used as fuel for the furnace, which
372 is lighted under a large circular oven, in which the vessels are placed in rows, one above the other. Cakes of buffalo- or cow-dung are placed on the top of the last layer of pots. The oven, be it noted, is roofless. The furnace below is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for some hours. Then the furnace is closed, and the fire left to burn out. Meanwhile, the cakes of dung get gradually hot from the heat of the furnace below, and this ensures a good heat at the top as well as at the bottom of the oven.

FIG. 75. WOMAN ARTIST PAINTING THE POTS

323 On the site of this pottery factory a large number of tiles are also made (Fig. 76), the material being ordinary clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Men only are employed in this industry.

Each tile is shaped in a shallow wooden mould with a handle very similar to that used in brick-making (see p. 154, Fig. 81). The tiles are turned out of the mould on to the ground, and there left to sun-bake for two weeks during the winter and for one week in the summer. They are then placed in piles in the oven, the baking being carried out in exactly the same way as described above. The furnace is kept open and constantly supplied with fuel for five to six hours in the case of smaller ovens, and for seven to eight hours when the ovens are larger. The whole process of baking occupies about forty-eight hours from start to finish; by that time the tiles have cooled down and can be removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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On another pottery-making site in Fayūm Province which I visited large *ziyār* and pans, as well as *ḫulal* (see p. 151) and other small vessels, are made. Both hand- and wheel-made methods are employed here. The clay used in the manufacture of the larger vessels is obtained from Kīmān Fāris. This clay is soaked in water till it is of the right consistency, then *mūṣ* is mixed with it and well kneaded. The words *mūṣ* and *tibn* both mean finely chopped straw, but the former is so finely chopped that it is more like a powder. This mixture is left to soak for one day in a large hollow in the ground. It is then removed and left piled up in a heap for four days before it is ready for use. Each potter takes a large quantity of this prepared clay and places it conveniently near the spot where he is working, keeping it covered with sacking to prevent further evaporation.

FIG. 76. MAN MAKING TILES

The *ziyār* and large pans are made on the wheel, the former in the manner described earlier in this chapter; they are, however, decorated with simple designs on the upper half of the vessel. This decoration is done with the aid of an implement called a *garūt* (see p. 152, Fig. 80), which consists of a thin, flat piece of iron bent at a right angle at the top.

For making the pans the process is as follows. The revolving table is covered with a thin layer of clay, and on this a thick pillar

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

The custom of binding the cord just below the rims of the larger pans may have been also practised in former times when making the upper part of a *zīr*. As I stated earlier in the chapter, the potter usually makes incised marks with his thumbnail just below the rim of a *zīr*, the marks roughly resembling those made by the impress of the cord. This impress may have suggested a pattern, which the conservative mind of the potter demanded should always appear on that portion of the pot, even when the cord was no longer wound round it. Thus the marks made round the base of the rim by the thumbnail may be an imitation of somewhat similar markings left by a cord bound round this part of the *zīr* in earlier times.

FIG. 78. PANS BOUND WITH CORDS DRYING IN THE SUN

Smaller vessels, such as *ḳulal* (singular *ḳulleh*) (Fig. 79), are also made at this factory, and the clay used is obtained from Begīg, or Abgīg, as this village is sometimes called. *Ṭafl* (yellow clay) brought from Kīmān Fāris is mixed with the ordinary clay, the proper proportions being two-thirds ordinary clay to one-third *ṭafl*. These two materials are laid in water to soak till they are quite soft. They are then removed to a deep cavity dug in the ground, where a man kneads them with his feet. The mixture is taken out and piled in a heap, so that the superfluous moisture may evaporate.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

ing way, the materials employed being taken from the palm-tree. 385

A number of the mid-ribs of palm-branches are split up lengthways, the leaves likewise. The basket-maker takes a certain number of the split mid-ribs, the number varying according to the required thickness of the coil, these forming a foundation. An iron needle, somewhat more slender than that used for the plaited baskets, is threaded with one of the split leaves, which is sewn over and over the foundation, almost, if not quite, concealing it. This type of basket is again built up spirally, each stitch being passed through the preceding coil (Figs. 86 and 87). Such baskets are made in a large variety of shapes, from flat, round trays to large receptacles with lids. They are often decorated with simple designs in colours, the leaves being, of course, dyed before they are sewn into the baskets. [53]

FIG. 86. UNFINISHED BASKETS, SHOWING METHODS OF WORKING

FIG. 87. BASKET WITH OPEN WAVY-LINE PATTERN

Some baskets, which I was told are made only in two small villages in Fayûm Province, have the base made in the way described above, while the sides show an open wavy-line pattern (Fig. 87). These also are made in a large variety of sizes and shapes, and are very attractive and decorative. The wavy line consists of mid-rib foundations closely bound round with the leaves. It must be remembered that both the leaves and the mid-ribs are fresh when the baskets are made, and are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep
[782] the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright orrise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawlid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. 531
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawlid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

794
242
708
171

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
253 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

*534

One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimal,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fīdha-š-šimal.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

The writer is however aware that his surmise concerning the stimulation 153
of memory in the village's culture is neither fully documented nor based on experimental data as was that of Nadel's experiments to ascertain the differences in cognitive processes between the school children of the two neighbouring tribes, the Yoruba and the Nupe.[1]

Moreover, the writer cannot comment on the effect of such a cultiva- 156
tion of the habits of rote memory on the individual's character structure. That there is a relationship between the method of learning and the individual's attitude towards himself, and his interpretations of experience, is claimed by Bateson and Mead. They maintain that if the individual is brought up in habits of rote memory 'his character will be profoundly different from what would result from habits of learning by insight'.[2]

It can also be shown than the interests and imagination of children are 159
tied down to concrete things and events such as food, animals, ceremonies, farm work, and so forth. It was found that the majority of their responses to story completion, free drawings and in Rorschach testing were highly impregnated with concrete realism.[3] One cannot fail to notice that both

[1] Nadel, from his experiments with story recounting and responses to pictures on some children of those two tribes, concluded that a people possessing a highly developed realistic art and drama, and a rich, complicated, and rationalized religious system, is characterized in the field of psychological reaction by stress on rational elements, logical cohesion, and strongly pronounced meaning-oriented approach as to what is presented to them. On the other hand, a people whose culture lacks such art and drama and whose religious beliefs are centred round abstract and impersonal principles, are psychologically different in the sense that they are more detached and inconsequent in observation and memory, enumerative, more sensitive to spatial and temporal arrangement, stressing unity of situation and emotional tone rather than facts and meaning and rational consistency. 'A Field Experiment in Racial Psychology', in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XXVIII, 1937–8, pp. 195–211.

R. H. Thouless, experimenting on the perception of twenty Indian students and a group of British students, concludes that the former group showed a significantly greater tendency towards 'phenomenal regression' to the real object than the latter group. For instance, in the case of the Indian students there was greater tendency for circular objects inclined to the observer to be drawn as wide ellipses, for parallel-sided objects with the sides receding from the observer to be represented as parallel, and for objects of the same real size at different distances to be drawn with very little difference in size. 'A Racial Difference in Perception', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. IV, 1933, pp. 330–9.

[2] Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, *The Balinese Character*, p. 84.

[3] For typical examples of story completion and Rorschach responses, see appendices.

As to free drawings, the writer has on two occasions asked pupils in the compulsory school to draw whatever they wanted to, and the following is a list of the subjects drawn: oranges, girls carrying baskets on their heads, a boy tending sheep, a car and a palm tree, a boy riding a donkey and a car behind him, a girl feeding a chicken, fish, a car with people gathered around it, palm tree and water, two boys racing on donkey back, ducks, a house, a trader selling sugar to a girl, lemons, bananas and oranges, a man cutting sugar-cane, a boy climbing a palm tree, a girl beating a tambourine, a ceremonial procession near the mosque, a farewell procession for a pilgrim.

When I asked some of the children about their drawings, none of them told me of any plot in the drawing. They were purely representative of things and concrete events. The [532]
children's drawings were characterized by the almost entire absence of 'landscape' in

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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One cannot fail to notice that both
828 children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and
[159] fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if',
[154] as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

871 In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the
794 present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational
876 ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men,
000 and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

[532] content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Muktadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

F C 302 852 778

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

F C [291] [532] [142]

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

F C [262]
F C [465]
F C [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

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On my first visit to Egypt in 1920, soon after my arrival at my brother's camp on the high-desert slope in Asyūṭ Province, a certain number of childless women sent appealing messages to me, asking if I would let them have one of the bones which were scattered in great numbers about the ancient burial site on which the camp was situated. Their object was to step or jump over the bone in order to ensure, as they believed, the production of offspring. I acceded to their request, and then suddenly thought of my pendants, which I had unfortunately forgotten to bring out to Egypt with me. However, I sent a message to the women to say that I had written to England requesting that certain very potent charms that I possessed should be sent to me as soon as possible.

[532]

FIG. 44. THE FOUR CHARMS OVER WHICH THE WOMEN STEP

When the parcel arrived I caused the fact to be known in the various villages of the district, at the same time intimating that I should be glad to see any of the women who wished to make use of them. From then onward women, sometimes as many as ten at a time, would come from various villages in the district, crossing the lower desert, and climbing up to our camp on the hills which rose into the upper desert. They were usually accompanied by a middle-aged man or woman, sometimes by both. The man was not present at the ceremony, but the woman chaperon stayed with them all the time.

The ritual was as follows. The women first repaired to one of the ancient decorated tomb-chapels, conducted thither by one of our servants, who had the key. On entering they each stepped seven times backward and forward over what they supposed to be the mouth of the shaft admitting to the subterranean burial chamber. When this performance was over they returned to the undecorated tomb-chapel in which I lived. Here I produced the charms, two of which were placed on the ground at a time. Then each woman

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it ([27]). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* ([28]) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

867 Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behavior which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

602 Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and 602 pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and 539 people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no [518] people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

> A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
> The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was responsible for paying the expenses of treatment. [533]
> The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am without support.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [751]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
  except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
  and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
  and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [783] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [776]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [782] [755] [782]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

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palm tree that extends from here to the island' (Al nakhla attawili, min hina lil jaziri).

7. One of their favourite games is for two boys to stand side by side linking the near hands, and for a third boy to crook a leg over the joined arms and place his hand on the near shoulder of each of the other two boys. As they advance at walking pace, he hops on his one leg, then sings 'The lame cock jumps over the hen' (Arag arroug, nat al faroug), as they quicken their pace. Races can be run in this way, having teams of three.

From the age of nine and ten till thirteen and fourteen years boys play more complicated games which are, on the whole, tougher and require more muscular skill, lasting longer.

8. For instance, a boy stands facing a wall, leaning forward with his palms flat to support him, his legs apart. Another stands behind him grasping him round the waist, another stands behind this latter grasping him similarly, and so forth for as many as are playing. The last one, however, is the active player in the game. His task is to detach each member, one by one, from the chain. This he must do by grasping the last member by both legs and pulling him how he will until he has detached the person in question, dragging him away to a base. Then he returns to tackle the next victim and so on. When he has finished this, another member is dragged till the chain, thus disconnected, is reformed to start again.

9. The game of 'Drag him, bring him along' is an interesting game for this age group. The boys are divided into two teams of equal numbers, and face each other on either side of a line drawn on the ground. Each boy grasps his opposite number by the right hand, across the line. The aim is to pull the opponent over the line of demarcation towards one's own side. Directly one member has done this, two boys, one from each side, are chosen to spit on the sand, and the loser, bending over with his hands on the ground, is slapped on the buttocks by all members of the other side. This continues until the two boys declare that the spit has gone dry. If, however, the victim wishes to curtail his punishment he must say 'I am a woman', whereupon the beating ceases, and the teams line up again and resume the struggle. A confession of 'womanhood' by a boy of one side is a point scored for the other.

10. There are also various versions of hide-and-seek. The well-known type is where one hides and the rest search him out while singing in chorus:

At-talab fat fat
  The fox passed, passed
wif-dailo saba laffat
  and in his tail there are seven knots.

A variation of this is called 'Policemen and thieves' with two teams, where each member of one team (the constables) must search out his opposite number in the other team (the thieves). Having found him, the searcher

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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must bring him to the base, often a task which entails struggle and strategy. After all the thieves have been rounded up, the teams change places, and the game goes on.

11. On moonlit nights the following game called 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' (Meennattak y kwaidees) is played with great zest. Two boys are chosen by turns, one to bend over on to all fours placing his head between the knees of the other facing him. The former's eyes are covered by the latter's hands, so that he cannot see. The other boys jump in turn over the crouching boy, who at each jump is asked by his partner by saying 'Who jumped over thee, O little pot?' If he guesses correctly, he can immediately change places with the jumper. If, however, he does not guess any of the names, the boys disperse after secretly informing the partner where they will hide, and the crouching boy must then guess where each one has hidden. A correct guess will merely bring back the boy whose place was correctly guessed from his hiding place, but inability to guess will mean that the hiding boy must be carried back to base.

12. 'The hidden heaps' (Kwaimat ad-das) is also a game played preferably on a moonlit night, with as many boys as possible joining in, as it is, *par excellence*, a game of the crowd. Two senior boys are chosen as leaders and the other boys pair up. The pairs decide on names beyond the leaders' hearing; one is wheat, the other barley, one is horse, the other donkey, and so on. They return to the leaders who alternately are given two such agreed names to choose from, and thus the two teams are formed. The leaders and their teams then set off in opposite directions, each team agreeing on the limits of an area to be covered. The aim is to make little heaps of sand or earth in out-of-the-way places, so unobtrusive that some effort must be made to discover them. The first team to return begins to make a noise, shouting, howling or calling, so that the other team shall return. Then both teams set off into the other's territory, to destroy as many of the heaps as they can find. On their way they sing:

Sharrag, gharrab, ya liamoon,
In the east, in the west, there are lemons,
Bahhar, ghabbal, ya liamoon.
In the north, in the south, there are lemons.

Then at last both teams meet again, and there is a check by each leader of the other team's work. This necessitates visits afterwards to both areas by both teams, and the heaps still left undestroyed on both sides are totalled up, the winning team having a balance of undestroyed heaps in their favour.

13. 'The little rope' (Hibail) is played with two boys seated on the ground facing each other, holding a rope tautly between them. One is called the 'Bridegroom', the other the 'Bride'. The other boys take turns to approach the 'bridegroom' and strike him with a small rope or a turban end. Then, and not before, the 'bridegroom' drops his rope and makes every

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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882 [834] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

882 [304] [302] [301]

883 539 533 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

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At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

[788]

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

The boy's family bought an outfit for the girl (composed of two black outer garments (tobs) and two colourful patterned gallabiahs. Together with the girl's outfit, a tob and a gallabiah were bought for the mother and a gallabiah for each of the bride's younger brothers. [584] [291]

Two days before the actual night of marriage, the bridegroom and some of his male relatives and friends who were unmarried went around distributing invitations to those the family wished to invite. Those invited would be expected to contribute during the forthcoming ceremony of 'haircutting' as in case of circumcision ceremonies.

The appointed day arrived, and began with the female celebration in the bridegroom's house. Women came with corn on their trays as their contribution to the mother who, in return, placed on the tray a loaf of wheat bread or a part of it and a piece of meat according to the contribution received.[1] During this exchange of gifts which took place between the late morning and the late afternoon, the boy's house looked very busy, but with hardly any men about. Women were singing and calling out their joy-cries and exchanging the good wishes. [585] [431]

In the late afternoon the girl invited her friends for the jar-filling ritual. Accompanied by four other girls the bride took her jar to the Nile, and on this occasion, as is the custom, she was allowed to linger as much as she liked on her journey to the Nile, provided she came back before sunset. On her arrival home she washed herself completely, was rubbed with henna and perfume by her mother and was wrapped in a woman's cover (twada), her face not being seen by anyone except her very close female relatives, e.g. mother, grandmother, maternal aunt.[2] She was then surrounded by a group of girls of her age who began entertaining her by playing on the tambourine, and singing the traditional songs of the occasion. The following is an example: [585] [515] [533]

> How pretty is the one we are entertaining,
> How we are admiring her.
> The snake in his hole
> has spent a sleepless night.
> He kept one eye on her forehead,
> and the other on her anklets.[3]

In the bridegroom's house there was the preparation for the procession round the village to take place before the evening prayer. The procession was led by some religious men beating on their drums and tambourines while chanting hymns of praise to the Prophet. On the way, and on arriving at the mosque, dates and sweets were distributed and children usually find such occasions most exciting when they scramble for their booty.

[1] It was here that the boy's paternal uncle's wife and some of her friends had a row with the boy's mother over what they ought to have received for their contribution. [578]

[2] Even the father himself is not supposed to see her face.

[3] The snake is presumably the symbol of the husband, who has been admiring the girl from top to toe.

[See category 116, p. 193 -- 4 AUGUST 195]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The villages are intersected by narrow lanes—in most cases they can hardly be dignified by the name of streets—progress along which is often impeded, sometimes almost entirely blocked, by piles of refuse and mud. In some of the larger villages there may be one or two broader streets, forming the chief thoroughfares (Fig. 8). At the side of one of the narrow lanes there may be an open space in which palm-trees grow (Fig. 9), and here the village weaver often arranges the warp for his cloth, the threads being attached to the trunks of two of the trees (Fig. 10). When this process is completed the warp is taken indoors and attached to the

FIG. 8. A VILLAGE STREET

loom, which usually stands in a somewhat dark room, with mud-coloured walls, and so small in size that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Itinerant vendors ply their trades up and down these tortuous village lanes, uttering their characteristic cries. For example, the onion-seller advertises his wares by calling out, " Oh, onion, sweet as honey ! " The cries are usually intoned in a minor key, sounding to the uninitiated more like a plaintive chant than the proclamation of goods for sale. Another hawker may trade in coloured cotton cloths, printed with various designs to suit all tastes. He usually conveys his goods about on a small hand-cart. From such humble beginnings more than one fortune has been made, for the peasants are fond of hoarding their money, their daily living costing them but little. In time the small sums thus

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said "No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

"*Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ*" ("Better, much better"), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi!*" ("O my brother, my brother!").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 764 492 152

I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

F 764 794 788 533 F [537]

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until the third day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533]

FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[461] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926). 1927
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Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] [152] [283] [415]

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is 243 employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of 789 the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. 978 These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

787 796 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

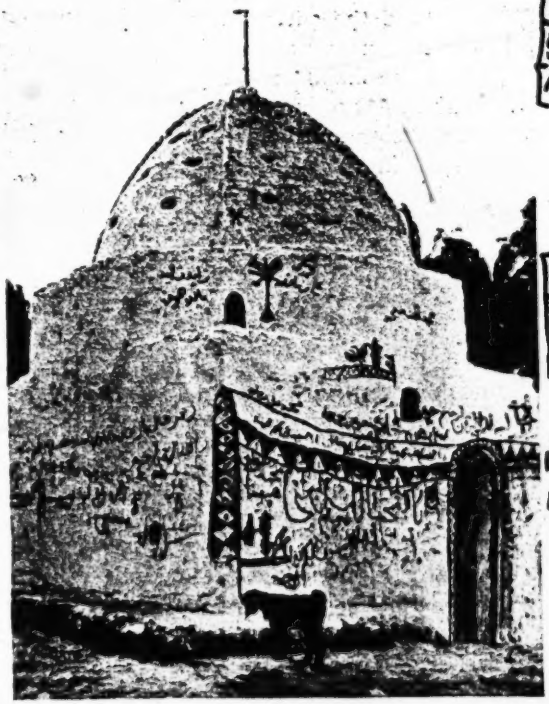

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested 796 audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a 769 woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat [538] a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the [533] amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite [536] national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144). [529]

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see 796 769 533

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the 000

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
796 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
788 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this
769 religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
● [533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p.81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

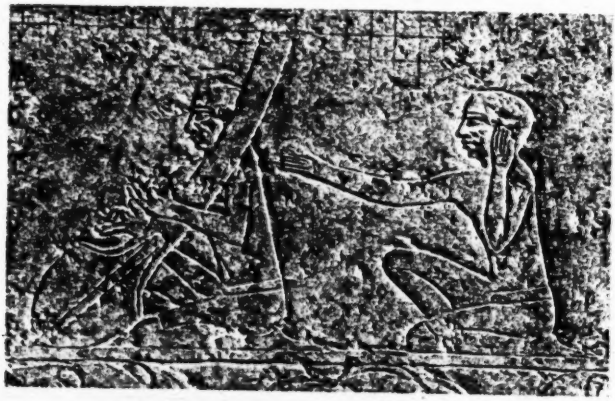

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

A [532] [534]

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, A 533 532 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

T

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

F A 533 537 775

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

F A C 852 302

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

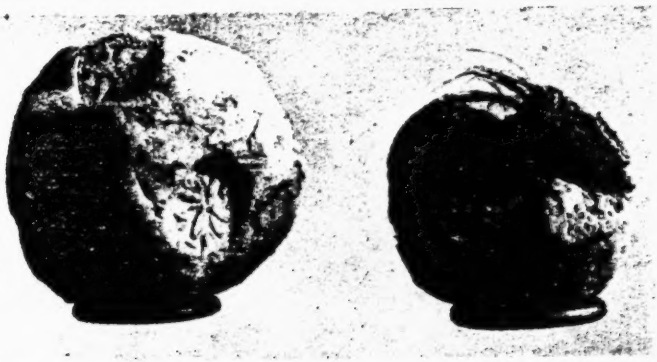

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-ʿAMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-ʿAmarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

F A 304

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

A [113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

in the earth, at the water's edge, two stakes about five feet 241
high and a yard apart. When wood is scarce, these two 312
pillars are made of cane or maize stalks daubed over with mud. They are joined at the top by a horizontal bar, like the crossbar of a goalpost. At the middle of this crossbar is balanced a lever more or less straight and about ten feet long. Its shorter arm bears a heavy rock or a great lump of dried mud, and at the end of the longer arm hang two or three yards of rope carrying a bucket, leather basket or old petrol can. This apparatus is placed in the same axis as the channel to be filled.

The fellah stands on a platform made halfway up the bank and pulls down the balanced pole until the bucket dips into the water and fills itself. A slight upward push, helped by the counterweight, brings it just above the runnel, into which it is emptied. All these movements are slow and rhythmic, sometimes accompanied by a droning chant. [533] Their variety might seem to lessen the effort, and yet the fellah finds this task more gruelling than any other. This is the impression one would gather from the melancholy tone of his chant, and it is confirmed by those who have had the patience to collect the words of such songs ([22]).

By the end of a twelve-hour day two fellaheen working alternately in two- or three-hour shifts may succeed in watering about 1/8 acre of cultivated land. One apparatus of this kind suffices for the cultivation of a feddan. The water may be taken from a well or a pool.

This method is widespread amongst the poor peasantry of the East and Far East, especially the Arabs. But the system originated in Egypt. It may be seen depicted on the oldest bas-reliefs, and nowhere else is it so much in use.

The *shadûf*, as it is called, may be used in combination. In the region of Qena and Dendera, in Upper Egypt, you may still see sets of two, three or four of these apparatus used together or in series, to raise the water from a depth. But when the level is very low the *saqia* is more often used.

The *saqia* is really a machine, though clumsy and primitive. It is made from acacia or sycamore wood and driven not by manpower but by beasts.

The great horizontal wheel, turned anti-clockwise by a harnessed ox or donkey, engages with its rough cogs a vertical

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(61)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(61a).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12) c F 796 527

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755 787 533 534

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

533
534
755
787
[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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776

These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at [755] getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's [782] body, heart and brain.

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

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(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who
can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour
the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to
fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who
hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you
King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all
your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

533 The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, plural: fellāḥîn), made up of hard work and few pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

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[1]) According to Maḥmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
[121] all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

×539 One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimal,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha tera'i
wil-maḥrame fīdha-š-šimal.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[293] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8: Schaefer

MR13 Fellahin
Upper Egypt

533

[For information on Fellahin songs, see category 116, pp. 1-148.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [082]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [071]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[282] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many 796
strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels
behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry 541
the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered [578]
with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the
main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with
a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of
the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is
also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has
his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable simi-
larity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues [174]
of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are col-
lected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed
by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon
rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments,
gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity.
Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get
their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head [534]
the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums
and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night
watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials [625]
in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual
fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the
muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province [635]
or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the pro-
cession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of
Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular
troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led
by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under
the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have
been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their
rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before
every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns [535]
and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh [533]
are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more
musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispens-
able even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to
have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[779] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine 533
young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a 527
singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest [534]
regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

Dancing-girl.

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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters [534]

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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
● 533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533]
while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534]
under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838]
the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 779
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

> "She (the loved one) has made me a cap
> Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

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585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The
[292] immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole
[292] of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[302] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply black-
[301] ened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu mughfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [171]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204-408 not processed]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles. [534]

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more. [516] [788]

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

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Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be seen squatting on the ground, often accompanied by their male relatives, with their goods spread out before them. The market of cheese and *semn*—the latter clarified butter regularly used in cooking—is conducted solely by the women, so far as I have seen, and they bring these provisions in metal pans carried on their heads.

Large numbers of pottery water-bottles are nearly always to be

FIG. 96. A SHOEMAKER ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MARKET

found for sale at the markets, the better ones being made at Ḳena, in Southern Egypt, and exported thence far down the Nile.

The tinsmith also does good business, making mugs (*kīzān*, singular *kūz*), primitive lamps, and other articles on the spot, using for this purpose old paraffin-oil and petrol tins.

A shoemaker is usually to be seen squatting at work in a spot on the outskirts of the market, with a number of shoes ready for sale on the ground by his side (Fig. 96). He has an iron anvil in front of him, similar to that used by the brass- and copper-smiths, described in the first chapter (p. 32). Near by may be seated sellers of musical instruments, such as the pipe (*nāi*), the *zummāreh*,[1] and the

[1] Double pipe with a drone.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([51])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([51a]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language, More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (12) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (13) C F 796 527

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the [787] ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing [533] during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows: 787

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly. 533 534

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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787
[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balā Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [534]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [198] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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23.

Enough of Play!

×539 861 The mothers have difficulty every evening, in inducing the children, who play in the streets until late in the evening, to come home to supper.

A child who is sent out to get the others, speaks:

Ya laʿibîn kull el-lēle,
iṭʿaššu u-taʿālu!
Win mā gētûš il-lēle,
laḥaddifkum bi-ʾulʿēle,
5 *simm el-fār*
miʿ el-ʿaṭṭār.
[Iḫbaṭ ya ṭar
kull el-lēle!]

You, who play all night,
Come and have your supper!
And if you do not come this evening,
I shall throw a clod at you!
5 Mouse-poison
Is (to be had) at the grocer's!
● [534] [Beat, tambourine,
The whole night through].

[805] 1. Night begins at sunset. Lēle, "night", often designates, therefore, our evening.
5. 6 I might poison you!
7. 8 May have been taken from some other song.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

796 [788] [443] [265] [262] 538 [534] [533]

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many 796
strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels 541
behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry
the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered [578]
with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the
main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with
a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of
the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is
also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has
his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable simi-
larity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues [174]
of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are col-
lected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed
by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon
rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments,
gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity.
Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get
their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head [534]
the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums
and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night
watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials [625]
in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual
fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the
muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province [635]
or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the pro-
cession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of
Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular
troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led
by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under
the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have
been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their
rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before
every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns [535]
and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh [533]
are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more
musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispens-
able even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to
have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a [534] mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday fol- [262] lowing people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash [783] themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mufruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

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527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[279] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he
then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark
with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[533] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and
[535] singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a
Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own
special name of *balo*. In the court, or the space in front of the
house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats
are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candel-
abra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivi-
ties. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot,
high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots;
but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The
dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn
a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as
quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl
are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their
rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms
seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the
mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of
the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful
freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
● 534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the
reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive
tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine 533
young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a 527
singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest [534]
regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

Dancing-girl.

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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawâzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters [534]

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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533]
while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534]
under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838]
the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 779
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

> "She (the loved one) has made me a cap
> Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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585 Under the red glow of crackling pitch torches, amid the unme-
[372] lodious noise of copper hand-drums, the joyful toot of a double
[534] reed-pipe, and the hymns chanted by the schoolmasters and
[533] other pillars of the faith, followed by half the inhabitants of the town, the bridegroom walks from night prayer in the mosque to his own dwelling. Here the procession halts. The singers form a ring and sing around the hero of the wedding, for whom the marriage torches form an illumination. A transparent vernal down is springing on his full smooth cheeks, his stature gives hope that he will grow for some years still, his voice as it is heard now and then sounds childishly delicate, or struggles painfully with the voice of manhood. The
[292] immature form of the youth is clothed in a coat of scarlet cloth, for the first time the manly turban rises on his head, and by his side hangs the marriage sword. Solemnly, seriously, and slowly he paces onwards in the midst of a few of his companions. The procession halts before this or that house, and the chief personages and musicians are regaled with sweetened coffee and sherbet, musket shots sound in the stillness of night, till at last his father's house is reached. Hither the bride has already come in another direction from the
[292] house of her parents, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot enveloped in a Cashmere shawl, which, like the red coat of the bridegroom, is generally borrowed for this day only. She is embraced, and almost carried by two wives, and followed by a crowd of women and girls uttering cries of joy. The house of feasting is lighted up outside with gay lamps and lanterns, and here the people amuse themselves with the dancing-girls, singers, and buffoons, or, if more seriously disposed, listen to the mysterious words of the Koran, or tire themselves out in zikrs, while the bridegroom mounts to the chambers of the women, and lifts the veil of her who has been chosen for him, and whom he has never yet seen, unless, tormented by impatience, he has already, on the occasion of the procession from the mosque, gone through this momentous
[302] proceeding in the house of the bride. There she stands before
[301] him, the little, tender, lovely maiden, her eyes deeply blackened with kohl, her hands coloured red, her face dotted over

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 302 852 778

I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

F C 302 852 778

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the [illegible] or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

F C [431] F C [535] [152]

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I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

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similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback.

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her!

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor.

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening,

[1] See p. 87.

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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

" *Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ* " (" Better, much better "), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of " *Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !* " (" O my brother, my brother ! ").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(51)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(51a).

535 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah ! Allah !" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is nó peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12) C F 796 527

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755 787 533 534

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes. [286] [354]

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red". [826]

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd). [826]

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis ʿagātak,
Ya miššaḫlaʿ min dān aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nismaʿ ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḫlaʿ refers to the coquettish movements in dancing and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent. [535]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [275]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

796 541 [578] [174] [534] [625] [635] [535] [533]

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527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[279 generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he
then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark
with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[533] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and
[535 singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a
Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own
special name of *bals*. In the court, or the space in front of the
house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats
are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candel-
abra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivi-
ties. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot,
high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292 embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots;
but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The
dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn
a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as
quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl
are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their
rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms
seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the
mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of
the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful
freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the
reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive
tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

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bourines with jingling metal plates attached. Or a genuine 533
young singing-girl (an *almeh*) has been sent for, often also a 527
singing-boy. With elevated necks they rise up to the highest [534]
regions of the tenor, always despising, however, the feminine region of the falsetto voice; anon they let their voices sink deeper and deeper with the most delicate swells and modulations, but seldom venture down into the bass voice. All sing together in the same key; harmony is unknown, monologues and recitative choruses being generally sung. Rapid shading is strictly avoided, and, accordingly, the Arab derives no pleasure from European music, regarding it as disagreeable and ridiculous, or at best remains indifferent to it, as something foreign. From time to time modulations occur which suspend the expected close. The sound now dies away like the stroke of a bell trembling through the stormy air. A sudden outburst of ecstasy begins a new period, the most delightful sounds of which are uttered through the nose. Allah! Allah! shout the people in rapturous enthusiasm, and the singing-girls, encouraged by the applause, sing still more delightfully, the kettle-drums and other instruments become louder and stormier.

Dancing-girl.

535 ●
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At such moments rise the dancing-girls, the celebrated *bayaderes* of Egypt, commonly called *ghawdzi* (not *almeh*, which means a singing-girl). Only a few of these form an artistic conception of their parts, and represent in pantomime the common history of a love affair—pursuit, coyness at first, victory, and lastly, entire self-abandonment. Their much-admired dances are, however, generally quite inartistic, having no regular figures, no keeping of time, no combined movements. In dancing the girl skips backwards and forwards before the spectators, raises the arms, clatters [534]

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535 527 [534] the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients), and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For 533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or [558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion, 527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh 793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers [171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 527 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much

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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533]
while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534]
under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838]
the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 779
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *funtasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

"She (the loved one) has made me a cap
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] ing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

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443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested 796
audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a 769
woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat [538]
a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the [533]
amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite [536]
national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made
little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a
horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144). [529]

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see 796
769
533

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the 000

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (11) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (12) c F 796 527

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[527] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
[536] coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[237] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the [182] poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I [965] believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the [189] house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

857 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a considerable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of [554] honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [272] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii. p. 264.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E 585

and that the procession is accompanied by men carrying lanterns and candles. As they proceed the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*. The priest addresses the pair, but before he does so he takes a silken thread and passes it over the right shoulder of the bridegroom and under his left arm, where he ties the thread into a knot with a loop. After the address from the priest is over the bridegroom pays him a sum of money, and then the priest undoes the knotted thread. He then takes the two engagement rings which the bride and bridegroom gave each other at their betrothal and ties them together with a silken thread. After putting certain questions to the pair he returns them their rings, and each puts his or her ring on; the bridegroom does not place the ring on the bride's finger.

E 585 537

After the service is over the priest invites anyone present who may wish to do so to speak. Perhaps one man may get up and deliver an oration, in which, in addition to various other complimentary remarks, he will probably compare the bride to the moon, and the bridegroom to the sun. Others will follow his example, and even women are permitted to speak on such occasions. The bridegroom then either himself thanks his friends for their kindly speeches or asks his father or his brother to do this for him.

E 585 292

Both bride and bridegroom wear new clothes on the occasion of their marriage, and they wear these garments for seven days after the wedding. When this period has elapsed these clothes are put away for several days, and then they can be worn at any time.

E 585 789

When the bride is on her way to the bridegroom's house her unmarried female friends who accompany her thither pinch her on one of her thighs. By doing this they believe that they also will soon get a husband. The bridegroom is pinched in the same way by his unmarried male friends, who hope that this will ensure each of them a bride. I am told that this is a common custom among the *fellāḥīn*.

On the morning after the marriage night the bridegroom when he goes out pulls a branch off a palm-tree, tears off all the leaves, and then cuts off a long length of the thicker end of the mid-rib as a stick. He then splits up one end of it several times, so that these split ends stand out slightly. With this split stick he strikes any of his unmarried male friends whom he happens to meet. Those whom he thus strikes will, it is believed, shortly marry too. This, according to my informant, is a very old custom which was formerly

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COOTS MR10

approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

" *Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ* " (" Better, much better "), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !*" (" O my brother, my brother ! ").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E
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152

I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E
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346
152
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When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

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794
788
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[537]

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR 10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was
799 a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus
788 commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then
533 began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning
537 many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with
250 the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days
775 only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my
356 Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning,
780 but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended
775 by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of
793 the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

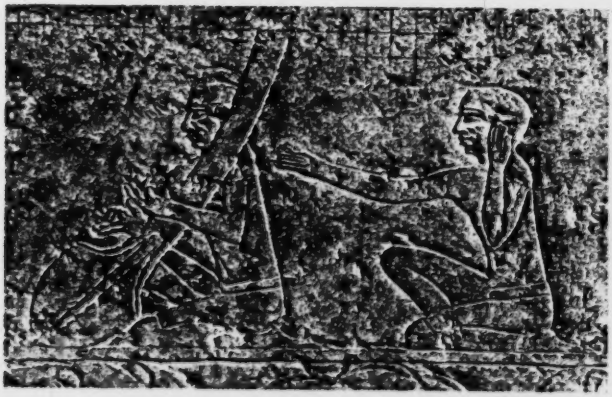

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

A [532] [534]

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, A 533 537 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

T

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

FA 533 537 775

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

FAC 852 302

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

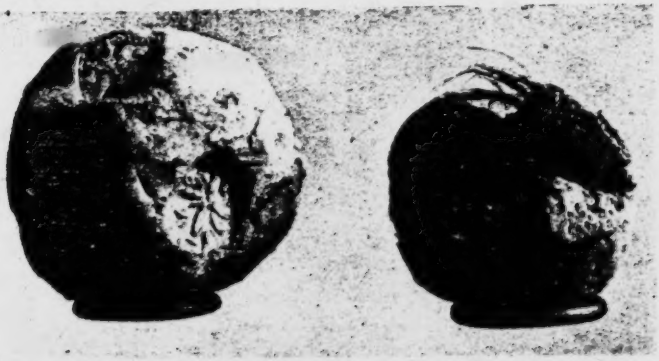

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

FA 304

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

A [113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

47.

Sympathy.

×599 In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied.
351 In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarîm
[537] (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden.
Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri mal ʿal-faṣʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḫaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwāti,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
[461] And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
[609] The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
[673] 5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare
[801] the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmūd's.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

120.

Ye Stars of the Night!

539x
821
[537]
[773]

'Alye is the ladylove of the noted hero of romance, Abu Zēd, whose life forms a favorite theme for public recitations. He belonged to the tribe of the Beni Hilāl.

Ya nugūm el-lēl, šūfu mā garā-li!
Mā yenām il-lēl illa abu 'albē ḫali.
Ya ma baket 'Alye 'al-Abu Zēd el-Hilali!

Ye stars of the night, see what has happened to me!
At night he only, sleeps, whose heart is free.
How hath 'Alye wept for Abu Zēd el-Hilali!

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Eight

CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is important for an understanding of the social and psychological development of children in Silwa, to examine the tales, fables, and other stories transmitted to them from time immemorial.[1] Before embarking on this, however, a few introductory remarks should be made in connection with folk literature in general in this community. Such literature is relatively meagre in both quantity and quality compared with some other non-literate communities. In Silwa at present there are no myths, indigenous legends, and hardly any economic lore as in some primitive communities, all of which attempt to explain the nature of the universe, the history and origin of the people, or transmit traditional knowledge as applied to the solution of economic problems.[2] There is no doubt that, before the advent of Islam, and of Christianity before that, the Ancient Egyptian myths and folk literature must have been the oral code guiding the beliefs and values of folk people in Ancient Egypt. The survival of these is still evident, in spite of Islamic doctrines, in beliefs and ideas about jinn, invisible counterpart (Karina), saints, sacrifice, the evil eye, and so forth.[3] The changes in religious and social attitudes of the people, through becoming part of the Moslem society, have obscured the previously existing system of oral tradition. Perhaps some of its elements still persist in a modified form in the folk tales and children's stories found at present in rural Egypt.

The adult attitude towards children's stories is very similar to their attitude towards children's games, and there is hardly any adult, especially amongst men, who admit that he tells stories to his children. Stories, as seen through the 'puritanic' eyes of adults, are considered to be demonic, and of no practical value. Story-telling is also included in the concept of dissipated leisure (lahw) which such a stoically religious community does

[1] G.P. Lestrade, 'Traditional Literature', in *The Bantu Speaking Tribes*, ed. by I. Schapera, London, 1946.

[2] The full text of the stories is given at the end of this chapter.

[3] See E. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, London, 1926.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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not accept as one of the commendable spheres of indulgence in a pious life.[1] While mothers may occasionally tell their children a story at night, fathers could never be expected to do it, as it might encourage that intimacy and levity towards them which is incompatible with the ideal of paternal respect. Story-hearing and telling is a feature of the child and adolescent groups. The writer has not found literate people in Silwa entertaining the reading of novels in the modern sense, as they are regarded 'unreal' and of no immediate value.[2] Children and adolescents must be weaned away as quickly as possible from such imaginative frivolities like story-telling, and acquire the didactic literature of proverbs and wise sayings that enable the boy to cope with the realistic and matter-of-fact affairs of life. The accumulated wisdom of the past, the adults think, is contained in these proverbs and the reported deeds and acts of men of religious or social prestige. They are inordinately fond of quoting proverbs and maxims whenever an occasion for them arises. Rattray has observed the African's predilection for proverbs in his speech: much the same might be said for Silwa. He states that the best retort 'for any new-fangled suggestion or argument, however convincing, is to quote some proverb, however banal and inept, for such a reply is invested with all the force and sanctity of immemorial usage, and therefore conclusive'.[3]

Story-telling also includes the interesting events that happened in the village, or that happened to children. It is a more preferable pastime in winter than in summer, when boys, and occasionally girls, gather at a cosy corner outside the house 'to curtail the long winter nights' as one of the boys put it. On the whole, one can say that a child, on the average, spends an hour a week in these story-telling sessions. But this does not mean that all children take part in these sessions, or know fairy tales and stories. In fact, quite a few children, of both sexes, whom I asked in the compulsory school and in the neighbourhood, knew no stories of any kind. If parents tolerate these story-telling sessions, they do not consider them of any educative value at all.

Children, however, listen to stories and tell them to each other, not in the house or in the presence of the father, but usually outside the house. They will stop their narration on the approach of an adult, and consequently the writer was not able to listen to or observe any of their normal sessions. These sessions are seldom held during the day, as the boys believe that story-telling in daylight brings wrath, like sleeping in the late afternoon (nawmat al asr). Here one sees the functional relationship between children's leisure and their economic responsibilities. Through such beliefs, with their concomitant emotional effects, the scope for flouting responsibility for work is delimited in a roundabout way. Like play, the community

[1] See Chapter VII for the connection of 'lahw' and play.
[2] There are no novels at all amongst the books that the villagers possess.
[3] R. S. Rattray, 'The African Child in Proverb, Folklore and Fact', in *Africa*, Vol. VI, 1933, p. 426. For some of the proverbs collected in the village, see Appendix VI.

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reluctantly admits the value of story-telling to children, accepts its occurrence at night as a safety valve, as then it would not wreck or endanger the 'puritanic' atmosphere.[1] 857* 538

The first eleven stories recorded in this study are a common stock for most of the boys and girls in the village, but I found no girl who knew any of the rest of the stories. This is understandable, as these stories are usually related and heard by boys and girls till the age of eleven or twelve, but after this age story-telling among girls is frowned upon and punished. This is the main reason why their stock of tales is meagre compared with that of the boys. Here, as in play, girls are expected to toe the line of adults earlier than boys. 857* 539

Most of the stories collected were from the compulsory school children. By no means all of them knew the full text of the stories, but most of them at least recognized or felt they knew the first eleven stories. In examining those who had known some of the stories, they repeated them in an almost identical way.

Children normally begin their narration of a story by saying: 'There existed' (Feeh), whereupon the listeners reply, 'God exists' (Allah feeh); older boys and old men would normally begin by, 'It happened and in the past many a thing happened, and upon God we rely' (Kan ya ma kan, wa 'ala allah attuklan).[2] The younger boys finish off by exclaiming, 'I've been to your house and come back, I've eaten the hen before the cock' (Ruht 'indakum wi jeet, akalt al farkha gabl addik).

In the text of the stories and tales, one can find reflections of many of the social, moral and religious norms and attitudes. In the manifest content of the stories, such norms and attitudes as those governing the relationships between members of the family, social expectations, religious aspirations and desire for children are not difficult to discern and need no elaboration. [867]

Moreover, anthropologists and psychologists have also tried to explain the latent content of folk literature, myth and legends. The interpretations of Freudian, Jungian, and other schools of psychology have been occasionally alluded to in the footnotes of the story texts.[3] The orthodox Freudians, as well as the Jungians, because of their racial and generalized interpreta-

[1] With regard to the fact that folk-stories are characteristically told at night, *Hermann advances the theory* that the choice of night is psychologically significant as after the day's work is finished and both narrator and listeners are tired, their critical powers of thinking, their attention and will are slackened. Thus social activities that are considered inappropriate during the day seem acceptable at night; in the same way certain themes in stories are exclusively acceptable during the evenings, and are incorporated in the folk-tale. See E. J. Lindgren, 'The Collection and Analysis of Folk-Lore', in *The Study of Society*, p. 360.

[2] This beginning is very similar to the way story-tellers in Iraq introduce their stories, as reported by E. S. Stevens, although by omitting 'ya' he misunderstood the meaning of the phrase and translated it as 'There was, there was not'. *Tales of Iraq*, London, 1951.

[3] C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (translated by R. F. C. Hull), London, 1951.

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APPENDIX VI

539 Many were the people whose thresholds were made of marble, but who had to be buried in dust.

Alli yibus fi balawi ghairuh, tilhoun 'alaih balaweeh.
He who considers other people's sufferings, would alleviate his own.

Aih yakhud ar reeh min al balaat.
What can the wind scour from floor paving? (You cannot get blood out of a stone.)

Min 'ashar al goam arbaeen yom, ya sar, ya asbah minhum.
He who associates with a group of people for forty days would then either depart, or become one of them.

Alli laih kabeer ma yendaribshy 'ala dahru.
He who has a patron would not have his back beaten.

Alli maloosh kabeer yishtari laih kabeer.
He who has no patron should find one (lit. buy one).

Kul fula wi laha kayyal.
Every kind of bean has a special person to appreciate it (lit. assess it).

Kul sagtah wi laha lagtah.
Everything that falls has got a gatherer.

Al 'ajalah min ashaitan.
Haste is of the devil.

Yinfa'ak dahabak das, wi waladak min dahrak bas, wi tourak min bagarak.
You can only rely on your hidden gold, your child descending from your loins and your calf from your cow.

Sahib balain kaddab, sahib talatah mundfig.
He who has two minds is a liar, he who has three is a hypocrite (usually said about a person who marries more than one wife).

Al khaly yigool 'ads.
The one who is indifferent would say it is lentils (said to a person who tries to underestimate the difficulties of another). The proverb is related of a person who committed adultery in the fields during harvest time; he was pursued by another. During his flight he gathered a handful of lentils. On being caught he was asked why he was pursued; his answer was that because he had stolen a handful of lentils. Yet the pursuer said, 'Of course those who have not seen what he did would say it is a handful of lentils'.

Girat haz wala faddan shatarah.
A small amount of luck (a 'kirat' is one twenty-fourth of a feddan) is better than a lot of hard work (feddan).

Al jahil 'adow nafsu.
The child is the enemy of himself (his own well-being).

[538] For a study of proverbs and proverbial statements, see Edward Westermarck, *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930. From our list of proverbs we have omitted also those included in this book, e.g. 'Learning is better than goods; 'When the bull falls down, the daggers are many'; 'What the

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eye does not see, the heart does not grieve for;' 'The funeral is great, and the deceased is a dog';[1] 'He fasted and fasted and breakfasted on an onion,'[2] etc. 539

No attempt at any theoretical study of proverbs or any kind of classification has been made here. Reference can be made to the masterly way that Westermarck has treated the subject throughout his work, especially in the Introductory Essay. 538

Here we can only point to the fact emphasized by Westermarck, that a people's proverbs cannot be taken as indicative of their character without full knowledge of other facts that the proverbs do not state.[3]

[1] It is 'mouse' in Morocco.
[2] In Morocco it is 'He remained fasting for a year and breakfasted on snails'.
[3] For examples see Westermarck, op. cit., pp. 58–4.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 114 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of 133 its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the 144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the 131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction 174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the 175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and ●538 imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FOREWORD

largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian fairy-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārit* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

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Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawâlid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawâlid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

[794] [292] [798]

[171]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
538

[Text continues on p. 255]

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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
796 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
788 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this
769 religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 [212] THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [429] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 129 114 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and from them I have collected and written down a large number of tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on [516] the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 115 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

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THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER

these tales, which he now relates to the people of his village in the evening. He also tells his tales to his customers, who often wait while he is dying the cloth which they have brought him. Thus some tedious hours of waiting are pleasantly whiled away. 538 115

When he first came to me he was somewhat shy, but after a while, seeing that I was really interested, he would start off without hesitation. Sometimes he would consult the schoolmaster as to what he thought would be most to my taste, giving him a short epitome of two or three stories. Then, when a suitable one was chosen, he would go ahead without further delay. Several stories were recited at a sitting, and occasionally I was writing them down for three or four hours on end. Our servants would often stand near, listening in breathless attention as the plot developed. [291]

FIG. 153. STORY-TELLER, WHO IS ALSO A WATER-CARRIER BY TRADE

The next year I engaged another man, who was a water-carrier by trade (Fig. 153). I was then living in tents near an out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt, and the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) kindly placed his reception-room at my disposal. Wealthier villagers would drop in from time to time and take a seat at a respectful distance from me, while humbler folk stood at the doorway, or squatted on the threshold, all alike listening enthralled, and from time to time uttering ejaculations of appreciation.

I was assured that these tales had never been committed to writing, but had been handed down orally. It may interest my readers to peruse the following, selected from a large number in my possession.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *felláḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Dumichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

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It should be observed that the story of *The Shah of Persia and his Daughter* (pp. 272 ff.) bears a certain resemblance to the tale told to Herodotus [1] about Mykerinos, his daughter, and the golden image of a cow. If there is any connexion between the two stories, that told to Herodotus may after all be a genuine native folk-tale and not, as Professor Spiegelberg has suggested,[2] a mere dragoman's explanation of a monument—unless, of course, the modern tale is simply a modification of the Herodotean, and reached the masses by way of the Hellenized Egyptians of Græco-Roman times.

[1] ii, 130 f.
[2] *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 13.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
321 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer*, *febrayer*, *mâris*, *abrîl*, *myo*, *yûnyo*, *yûlyo*, *oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharsonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(11)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(11a).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (**)

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again.

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support.

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard.

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence.

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found.

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (**)

provided these show real cordiality and interest and have come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 183 185

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism. 748

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the *'ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work. [538]

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and spiritual help: material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes: spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism.... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity." [2]

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Calls of the Radish-Vender.

539x
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar". (F. Kern.) [114] [538]

Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
5 *nuṣṣ el-balad tiṣhad-li,*
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
5 Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen [848] virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery com- [684] mitted by a woman was punished with drowning down to a short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his 796
nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of [788]
reverential bendings (*rak'a*) now demanded instead of the
usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging
of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the
dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at
other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed;
numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, [443]
have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night,
cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and
old; the café's are all well attended, and if one pleases he can [265]
now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee [262]
or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also
sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread,
or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the 538 ●
by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, some-
times bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by [534]
scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master
of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the
innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws [533]
from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boy-
hood and the time when we received our first music lessons
on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There
the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and
poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses,
the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his
viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which
form the material for every one of those tales, the number
of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore
—purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with 796
more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "pre- 594
pares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats
them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour pre-
vails, and at no time the whole year through does the
Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of
Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes
a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles,
in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
[536] coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[931] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these rolls him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behaviour which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

> A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
> The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was responsible for paying the expenses of treatment.
> The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am without support.

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'.

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others.

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women.

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between

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reluctantly admits the value of story-telling to children, accepts its occurrence at night as a safety valve, as then it would not wreck or endanger the 'puritanic' atmosphere.[1]

The first eleven stories recorded in this study are a common stock for most of the boys and girls in the village, but I found no girl who knew any of the rest of the stories. This is understandable, as these stories are usually related and heard by boys and girls till the age of eleven or twelve, but after this age story-telling among girls is frowned upon and punished. This is the main reason why their stock of tales is meagre compared with that of the boys. Here, as in play, girls are expected to toe the line of adults earlier than boys.

Most of the stories collected were from the compulsory school children. By no means all of them knew the full text of the stories, but most of them at least recognized or felt they knew the first eleven stories. In examining those who had known some of the stories, they repeated them in an almost identical way.

Children normally begin their narration of a story by saying: 'There existed' (Feeh), whereupon the listeners reply, 'God exists' (Allah feeh); older boys and old men would normally begin by, 'It happened and in the past many a thing happened, and upon God we rely' (Kan ya ma kan, wa 'ala allah attuklan).[2] The younger boys finish off by exclaiming, 'I've been to your house and come back, I've eaten the hen before the cock' (Ruht 'indakum wi jeet, akalt al farkha gabl addik).

In the text of the stories and tales, one can find reflections of many of the social, moral and religious norms and attitudes. In the manifest content of the stories, such norms and attitudes as those governing the relationships between members of the family, social expectations, religious aspirations and desire for children are not difficult to discern and need no elaboration.

Moreover, anthropologists and psychologists have also tried to explain the latent content of folk literature, myth and legends. The interpretations of Freudian, Jungian, and other schools of psychology have been occasionally alluded to in the footnotes of the story texts.[3] The orthodox Freudians, as well as the Jungians, because of their racial and generalized interpreta-

[1] With regard to the fact that folk-stories are characteristically told at night, Hermant advances the theory that the choice of night is psychologically significant as after the day's work is finished and both narrator and listeners are tired, their critical powers of thinking, their attention and will are slackened. Thus social activities that are considered inappropriate during the day seem acceptable at night; in the same way certain themes in stories are exclusively acceptable during the evenings, and are incorporated in the folk-tale. See E. J. Lindgren, 'The Collection and Analysis of Folk-Lore', in *The Study of Society*, p. 360.

[2] This beginning is very similar to the way story-tellers in Iraq introduce their stories, as reported by E. S. Stevens, although by omitting 'ya' he misunderstood the meaning of the phrase and translated it as 'There was, there was not'. *Tales of Iraq*, London, 1931.

[3] C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (translated by R. F. C. Hull), London, 1951.

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tions, take us away from the sociological relevance of fairy tales and folk stories. This approach has been criticised by anthropologists and the neo-Freudians who have a deeper appreciation of the cultural phenomena. Bidney asserts that great myths, for example, are great precisely because they lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations and thus perform wonders in stimulating the creative imagination.[1] The need is felt to elicit the aid of oral traditions to contribute to the understanding of culture, and for its integration more fully with other cultural data 'to deepen our knowledge of human nature, the functioning of human societies, and the psycho-dynamics of the adjustment of individuals to the exigencies of their culturally constituted worlds'.[2] In the light of this, we have referred to some tales as having 'Oedipus reflections', meaning by that not the Freudian libidinal desires of the infantile situation, but expressions of one of the fundamental aspects of interpersonal relationships, that of the attitude towards authority.[3]

In his formulations of the concept of the 'basic personality structure', Kardiner points out the impact of social institutions on personality development. He has made use of folklore as a check, as well as a lead for the understanding of personality orientations as manifested in different thought processes and sequences, and different fantasy life. Folklore, in his view, is not an expression of general human psychic fantasies, and autochthonous creation, but related to the realities of social situations. Moreover, it expresses the current strains, conflicts and frustrations of the individual and his culture.[4] The fruitfulness of such an approach to folklore is also expressed by Susanne Langer, who maintains that folk tales, whether the animal fable, the trickster story, the ghost story, or the fairy tale, can be regarded as mirroring subjective wishful thinking and reflecting certain cultural frustrations of a given society.[5]

In our analysis of folk and children's tales in Silwa, the formulations of Kardiner are relevant and useful in an attempt to understand some of the problems related to the personality development in this community. We may regard these tales as expressions of trends in the psycho-dynamic

[1] He further claims that no single correct interpretation can be valid for any myth or legend, and that psycho-analysis, by applying their assumptions to them, are but inventing 'scientific myths' of their own. David Bidney, 'Concept of Myth and Psycho-cultural Evolution,' in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 93. See also R. Linton in his Foreword in Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. xvii.

[2] A. Irving Hallowell, 'Myth, Culture and Personality', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIX, 1947, p. 544.

[3] Erich Fromm, *The Forgotten Language (an Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths)*, London, 1952.

[4] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 214. He states that a cursory comparison of the folklore of Trobriand and Kwakiutl culture shows that each is the product of different life goals, different perceptions of institutional realities, different impulses which must be controlled and different methods of controlling them. (p. 127.)

[5] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 1948, quoted by David Bidney, op. cit., p. 17.

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adjustment of the individual in his society, revealing life goals, desires, fears, tensions of living in this environment.

In the stories in question one may discern the following three basic trends permeating them, or a combination of two or three of them in the same story. The first trend is the constant recurrence of themes of food, especially meat. If children tend to repeat mechanically the text of the tale, they certainly give wide and vivid scope to their imagination when the theme of food crops up during narration. The exclamation of 'Ya salam' is always ready to be uttered when a boy dwells expressively on a food theme in a story and thus gives other children some gratification for their fantasies about food.[1] In the tales, however, reference to situations where food is eaten, given, enjoyed, hidden, or some risk undertaken in obtaining it, is abundant. This could be correlated with other cultural data such as 'the sanctity of food', the belief that somebody might 'breathe on bread or food' and thus render it dangerous to eat, and hence the custom of covering bread on a tray of food from the eyes of a stranger, or inviting him to 'have a bite' if he comes unexpectedly.[2] One is justified in calling these themes expressions of a 'food anxiety' according to Kardiner. It is only possible for the writer here to suggest the relationship between this 'food anxiety' and some social forces, such as the low level of subsistence economy in the village, the precarious conditions of agricultural techniques in which hard work does not always reap its adequate rewards, being threatened before the introduction of perennial irrigation by Nile flooding and occasionally by torrents and uncontrollable plant pests. Consequent on all this is the fellah's rationalization of fate, with regard to life's adversities.

Secondly, in some of the stories one glimpses reflections of the nature of the Oedipus myth: in story VIII, where the child kills his stepmother (symbolizing the bad mother in the dual mother role) and then his father; in story XIII where children are drowned in the well by their father, and the one like the 'bob tail' who managed to emerge into life again and achieve union with the mother; in story XVII, where Jiha takes his revenge by killing the father of the thieves with his 'bull's tail' and gains access to the wealth of the cave (mother). In some stories there is emphasis on masculinity, e.g. in story III where the only billy-goat that survives the ordeal of the wolf (the devouring father) is the one which is aware of its masculine capacity represented by its horns, enabling it to stand up to the father. Like the symbolism in the children's games, their tales also express certain anxieties of the castration type, especially in those stories of Jiha, who is deprived of his bull, of his money and of his blanket (XV, XVI, XVII).

[1] This was quite obvious during some of the 'children's hour' I used to hold.

[2] Making food covers (waleel, pl. willat) out of palm-tree leaves is a flourishing female occupation, and practically every girl starts learning how to make them before she gets married. See also Chapter IV for the villagers' secretiveness concerning food.

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On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 143.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

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Another tentative psychological explanation of fairy tales and folk tales in their social setting is advanced by Bartlett. He argues that the details and plots of such stories are usually derived from social customs and institutions. As social products, their psychological interest lies in ascertaining which of the three dominant tendencies of the instinctive social relationships, comradeship, assertiveness, and submissiveness, figure largely in them. In determining which of these instinctive tendencies takes first place in its expression in folklore, the cultural conditions and the external environment may be regarded as one of the most important factors. Thus in the folk tales, one could detect an expression of 'the preferred persistent social group tendencies' which could also be found in other fields of the same group's culture.[1]

Looking at these stories from such an angle, one can claim that the majority reflect 'assertive instinctive tendencies'. In story I the cock, which is the weakest of all the other animals mentioned, stands as the sole authority for information; in II the cock and the goat triumph over the donkey; in III the billy-goat asserts himself over the wolf; in V the cock (symbolizing the child) won the day with all those he dealt with; in VII the fox managed to laugh at the fisherman; in IX the boy succeeds in eloping with the chief's daughter; in X the nanny-goat scorches the wolf; in XI the scabby orphan boy asserts himself by having access to things which his uncle does not know and proves to be trickier than his uncle's wife; in XIV the poor boy and his sister get rid of their cousins who were richer and numerous; in the three Goha stories, XV, XVII, XVIII, the ridiculous and insignificant man asserts himself over his enemies and those who ridicule him. In story XVI he failed because of his profanity, for which he was deprived of his money.[2]

Following Bartlett's hypothesis, we find that the assertive instinctive tendencies loom large in most of these stories and could be regarded as 'the preferred response' in the group. This conclusion corresponds largely to our interpretations in the light of Kardiner's formulations. The weak, the insignificant, and the ordinary asserts its identity and becomes, through fantasy, as equivalent or even superior to the more fortunate and the more powerful. The link between 'assertiveness' as an over-reaction to an ego structure sensitive to being outdone or to feeling of inferiority is confirmed by the findings of clinical psychology.

In this connection, it is not without significance that one of the first phrases that the child learns to speak is 'May God curse your father', as a retort encouraged by his parents to anyone who may try to humiliate him.

[1] For F. C. Bartlett's views, I relied on the summary given in E. J. Lindgren, op. cit., pp. 358–66.

[2] In this connection the evidence from folklore and proverbs confirms Westermarck's observation that amongst the Moors God is always mentioned in a reverent manner. 'There is nothing of that familiarity or jocularity which is frequent in European sayings referring to Him, causing annoyance to puritanic writers.' *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 51.

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So far we have been chiefly concerned with analysis of tales mainly from a functional point of view, especially as data to be brought to bear on the socio-psychological problems of culture-personality. We have not exhausted the various ways of analysis of such oral traditions such as discerning a given motif, a tale type, a quality of inner experience, a sense of wonder and astonishment, and so forth.[1]

I

Once upon a time a cock witnessed the falling of the roof of a house, then the fox came along to enquire as to what happened, to which the cock replied, 'Can't you see?' Then came the wolf, who asked the fox about the matter, but the latter referred him to the cock saying that he himself did not know. Then came the tigress (daba) asking the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock. Then came the silowa, who asked the tigress, who referred her to the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock.[2]

II

There were once a goat, a cock, and a donkey who tended a farm together. One morning, on going together to the farm they discovered that the crops were eaten. As the goat and the cock were staying in the same house, they suspected the donkey of secretly eating the plants, but he denied it as he alleged he was lying sick in bed the night before. As they did not believe him they asked him to join them in taking a vow whilst jumping over the well. The cock crowed 'cock-a-doodle-do' and jumped over the well. The goat bleated 'na-na' whilst successfully jumping over the well. Then came the donkey braying 'hee-haw', but while he was jumping a wolf, who had lain hidden in the well, grabbed the donkey by the leg and gobbled him up.[3]

III

Three billy-goats were attacked by a wolf. Before he started tearing them to pieces to eat them, he asked the first billy-goat, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The wolf tore him apart and devoured him. Then the wolf asked the second one, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The same fate befell him. Then the wolf asked

[1] For a comprehensive survey of the various ways of analysis of folklore see E. J. Lindgren, op. cit. For a most stimulating analysis of 'The Oedipus Myth, and the fairy tale of Red Riding Hood', see E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*, London, 1952.

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[2] Reflections of fear of committing oneself can be detected in this tale, an expression of the uneasy climate of interpersonal relations in the community.

[3] Apart from its manifest moral content, the latent content could be regarded as one with Oedipus reflections taking the donkey as the father, and the goat and cock as mother and child respectively.

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the third goat, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' The answer this time was, 'They are loaded guns'.[1] Immediately the wolf heard this, he fled.

IV

Once upon a time there was a bride who, having been adorned with jewels, went to the Nile to gaze upon the water. While she was standing there she was seen by a crocodile, an animal which is always attracted by the glitter and tinkle of jewellery. Immediately the crocodile saw this beautiful girl, he advanced to swallow her whole and dived back into the the water. The girl lived in the crocodile's belly for a long time, until one day when the beast was on land, she remembered that she had a dagger, which she used to hack her way out of the crocodile, thus escaping alive to be reunited with her husband.[2]

V

A cock was once scratching the ground with his claws and found some seeds which he took to a woman and asked her to bake him two loaves of bread, which she did. The cock took the two loaves of bread and during his wanderings he found a hungry man tending his geese, to whom he offered the two loaves. The man ate the loaves, and enjoyed eating them, as they were made of wheat. But after that the cock asked the man either to hand back his loaves or to give him a goose instead of them, so the man offered him a goose.

The cock found another man tending his sheep, and waiting for a chicken or a goose to eat, which the cock was ready to offer. In the same manner, after the shepherd had eaten the goose, the cock insisted on either having back his goose or getting a ram instead, so the shepherd gave him a ram.

The cock wandered further, and found a group of men tending buffaloes, and looking for a ram to kill for a special meal, and the cock offered them his ram. After the meal was over, he made the same plea and got a buffalo.

The cock, wandering still further, arrived at a village where he found a wedding, the celebration of which was lacking meat, and he offered his buffalo. After the feasting, the cock went to the bridegroom and asked him to return his buffalo, or let him have the bride. So at last he got the bride and married her, and they lived together happily ever after.

[1] Assuming that these tales are transmitted from a time immemorial, this reference to 'loaded guns' must be a comparatively recent modification.

[2] This resembles the well-known stories of the hero in the belly of the whale. Joseph Campbell states that in the Eskimo tale of Raven and the whale, the principal deed of the adventurer is to make fire in the interior of the monster, thus bringing about the whale's death and his own release. As fire-making is symbolic of the sex act, the tale denotes the passage of the hero through the threshold of life into a sphere of rebirth symbolised in the life-centring, life-renewing act. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 90, 91, 248. Erich Fromm maintains that such stories, like that of Jonah, express an inner experience for a condition of being protected and isolated, of safe withdrawal from communication with other human beings. *The Forgotten Language*, p. 29.

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A mother had two boys, one called the clever boy (nasih), the other called the simpleton (dalihi). The simpleton went home to bring the midday meal for his brother, who was working on the farm. The meal consisted of loaves of millet and one loaf of wheat bread, besides a large pat of butter. On his way to the field the simpleton discovered that he was followed by his shadow, to which he constantly said, 'May God curse your father, why are you following me? Take this piece of bread and go away.' He kept throwing pieces of millet bread to his shadow until he had used up all the millet loaves.

Later on he found a cave into which he threw the loaf of wheat bread, uttering in horror, 'Oh, this is my father's open mouth. My father is hungry and I must feed him.' Thus he distributed all the food which he was supposed to take to his brother.

A little later he found some cactus which looked very dry, so he immediately threw the pat of butter on to these plants, saying disgustedly, 'Oh, this is my mother's hair, it looks so dry, I cannot bear it'.

On his arrival at the field his brother asked him about the food, and he answered in an enraged voice, 'How can you enjoy any food when your younger brother was following me all the way, while your father is starved and while your mother's hair is dry?'

The clever brother, therefore, had to go home to get his meal, leaving his simple brother to look after the sheep. While he was tending the sheep the simpleton ordered them to eat only the upper part of the grass and not the lower, on pain of punishment. By the time the clever brother returned the simpleton had killed all the flock except a goat and a sheep. When the former asked the latter about what he had done, the answer was that the flock had not obeyed his orders.

At the close of the evening the two brothers went home together, and on the way they found a horse, but the simpleton insisted on killing it and dividing it equally. Later they found a huge kite which they rode, but while they were on its back, the idiot stuck his finger into the kite's anus, and by so doing, the kite lowered her rump. In this way the simpleton fell off her back and was killed, while the clever boy returned home safely.[1]

VII

A fisherman on his way back from the river with his basket full of fish, saw a fox. When he came near the fox, the latter lay stretched on the

[1] This is one of the most favourite tales amongst both boys and girls. According to C. Jung the 'shadow' in this tale is an archetype embracing the inferior and less commendable part of a person (*The Integration of the Personality*, p. 20). The story, in Jungian psychology, could be interpreted as representative of the negative (idiot) and positive (clever) brother, the unconscious and the conscious, aspects of personality. Self-realization and individuation can only come through the co-operation between the two aspects, and the unconscious content can overwhelm, inhibit and even destroy personal fulfilment. (C. Jung and E. C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to the Science of Mythology*, p. 14.)

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ground pretending to be dead. The fisherman picked the fox up and put it in his basket on top of the fish. Surreptitiously the fox began to eat the fish, and after he had gobbled them all up, jumped out of the basket and mocked the fisherman, saying, 'I have triumphed over you' (literally, I have seared you). 'You will never be able to use my skin either in winter or in summer, while I have eaten up all your fish.'

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VIII

There was a man who had first a daughter and then a son. After the death of their mother their father married again. Their stepmother[1] hated them even more because she herself had not borne any children, and she used to make them work very hard for her.

One day she gave her stepchildren two baskets of equal size to fill with fuel (animal dung, bits of straw and wood found along the roads). She promised a loaf of wheat bread and an egg to the one who filled the basket first. The brother did not gather much fuel, and for most of the time he was taking fuel out of his sister's basket, and putting it into his own basket. In this way he filled his basket first, and returned home, asking his stepmother for the promised reward. The stepmother told him to wait until she grilled the egg in her neighbour's oven, and asked him to go to sleep in the meanwhile. On her return the boy was sleeping, whereupon she slew him with a sharp knife, put him in a pot, and proceeded to cook him as if he had been a goose.

When the sister returned, she enquired about her brother, and the stepmother replied that she had sent him on an errand to his maternal aunt. She asked her to go on heating the pot with the fuel, asking her not to take the lid off the pot. But while the stepmother went out to bake the bread in the neighbour's oven, the girl lifted the lid and saw her brother's finger: she was grieved and started to cry. When the stepmother returned she asked her why she was crying, and whether she had lifted the lid. The girl answered that she was not crying, but that her tears were caused by the smoke, as she had to blow the fire constantly for the fuel was not dry enough.

In the evening the father came home and the wife offered him his meal which consisted of his son's flesh. On enquiring why his daughter was crying, the stepmother told him that she refused her dinner, and that she could not find any reason for her grief. When the bones were thrown away, the girl collected them all and put them in a jewel box which she hid under the water-jar from which the family drank. After a while, the child's ghost (sul) appeared, singing a beautiful tune: 'I am a green sparrow, who was killed by my stepmother, and whose flesh was eaten by my bloody father (aboya alars), and whose bones were collected by my affectionate sister.'

One day while the stepmother was grinding corn, the boy sang the

[1] The stepmother is always referred to descriptively as the wife of the father (literally, the father's woman: 'marat al-abu', clas. Arabic, 'imrat al-ab').

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previous ditty for her, and she asked him to repeat it, expressing her admiration for his beautiful voice. But he refused to do so, unless she opened her mouth, and on her so doing, he dropped a stone of poison in her mouth which caused her death. He sang likewise to his father, when he was manipulating the 'shadoof', and was asked to repeat the song. The boy refused to do so unless his father stretched himself in the water, and on the latter's so doing, the boy seized the opportunity to drown his father and thus got rid of him like his stepmother.

The boy sang the same refrain to his sister when she was filling her jar from the river, and on her asking to repeat it, he requested her to open her mouth, into which he dropped a piece of sugar. He used to go to different places especially on ceremonial occasions, singing the same tune, repeating it on condition that the hearers should give him something edible or valuable which he would always take home to his sister.[1]

IX

There was a man whose wealth consisted mainly of camels, which he used to breed and rear. God gave him a son whom he sent to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran. After the death of this man, the wife took over the husband's task of tending the camels and thereby caused much embarrassment to her son in the Kuttab, as other boys used to sneer at him for letting his mother do the work which he himself ought to be doing. The boy, thus goaded by his mates, told his mother of his wish to do the same job as his father, but his mother tried to convince him that it was better for him to continue memorizing the Koran till he finished it. At last, however, the boy insisted on relieving his mother of her task, and began to look after his father's camels.

One day the boy, now reaching the marriageable age, while fetching water from the well for the camels, noticed a beautiful girl on a camel followed by a slave. He invited her to bring her camel to drink from his well, and when he caught a glance of her at close quarters he immediately fell in love with her. The girl also fell in love with him and as a gesture of her love, dropped her silver anklet into the well. After she had left, the boy went down into the well and retrieved the anklet: this made him even more desirous of marrying her.

[1] This is another favourite. In this story there are Oedipus reflections; the child by killing his father and bad mother (stepmother), his incestuous longings triumph at last by uniting himself to his sister (which is also a symbol of the good mother). However, the tale represents a state of regression. According to Freud, the growing out of psycho-sexual desires for incestuous longings, achieving a state of horror with regard to incest, is a sign of maturity (*Totem and Taboo*, p. 17). According to Erich Fromm this regression is due to fear of authority and repressed desire for dependency, a conflict between the desire for independence and freedom in growth and social arrangements frustrating the scope for such growth. In the light of his latest book, *The Forgotten Language*, this story could be interpreted as representing the victory of the matriarchal principle (mother and sister) of love and affection over the patriarchal principle of authority and hierarchy.

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From that day the boy's health deteriorated, and he lost his appetite. The mother hired someone to look after the camels, and directed all her attention to the treatment of her son with charms and medicine. One medicine man told her that her son was not actually sick, but in love; and on enquiring about this, the son confessed everything to his mother. Then she gave him the best she-camel she had and told him to go and visit the girl's people.

On his arrival in the girl's village, he discovered that the girl's father was the chief of his tribe, and one who never allowed any stranger to enter his land. Somehow the boy managed to contact the slave who had followed the girl on her errand, and who told him that the girl's father had a custom of confining himself to his home for a week, appearing publicly in the following week, and that that very day was his first day of retirement. The boy was pleased at this news and enquired of the slave the best way of speaking to his beloved. The slave told him that he should follow her camel which, at the end of the day, went to the house to be received by the girl herself. So the boy tied his she-camel to the girl's he-camel, and in the evening he succeeded in meeting her. During the night they fled away on their camels from that land.

During their sleep on the way, another chief passed by and admired the sleeping girl's beauty, and desired her for himself. While the chief was planning to abduct the girl, his he-camel had intercourse with the boy's she-camel, a fact which the boy discovered when his she-camel became pregnant a short time after he returned home. Despairing and frustrated, the boy returned to his mother, where he relapsed into his sickness.

When the boy's camel brought forth a he-camel, the mother told her son that it was this young camel that would help him to rescue his beloved as it would run faster than its father, the chief's camel. After three years, when the young camel had grown up, the boy went to the same spot where his beloved had been taken away, traced the footprints of the camel on which the chief had ridden, and thus reached the land where his beloved was.

On his arrival, he enquired about her from an old woman, who told him that the girl was now married to the chief and had two sons by him. The old woman, however, arranged a meeting between the boy and his once beloved, who on seeing him told him that it was now all over between them, but that she would tell of a device to enable him to have his revenge. She told him that her husband had married another wife before her, one who had four daughters, and they would be walking in the village all by themselves that night while all the other people in the tribe would retire to their homes, so she told him to take a chance of matching the chief's eldest daughter and running off with her.

The plot succeeded and the boy eloped with the chief's eldest daughter. Immediately the chief heard about the news, he rode on his camel in

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pursuit, but could not catch up with the elopers. Then he gave up chasing, after his realization that the man who had carried off his daughter was none other than the person from whom he had stolen his beloved. The chief inferred this from the fact that the camel that the daughter-snatcher was riding must have been the son of his camel and thus much faster than his sire.

When the chief returned home, he asked his wife about the boy's land, and after a time he equipped himself with gifts and food and went with some members of his tribe to the boy's home. On his arrival, he blessed the marriage of his daughter to the boy, and told him that he had avenged himself.

x

There were three nanny-goats who met three men, one carrying clover, the second wood, and the third bricks. The first nanny-goat asked one of the men to give her the clover so that she might build a home for herself, and he gave it to her. The second goat asked the second man to give her the wood for the same purpose and he gave it to her. The third goat asked the third man to give her the bricks and he did so.

Each of the nanny-goats built a house for herself from the material she had received from each man. Now, one day the wolf visited the goat who was living in the clover house, enticing her to come out, but when she refused, he jumped into her house, and devoured her. The second day he went to the second goat living in the wooden house and asked her to come out, but when she also refused, he jumped into the house and ate her. On the third day he went to see the third goat living in the brick house, and when she did not come out he endeavoured to jump into her house, but in vain.

Then the wolf tried to trick the surviving nanny-goat by telling her that he knew of some good grass where she could graze. She asked him where it was and promised to meet him there at an appointed time, but she went earlier, fed herself, and returned home. After the wolf had discovered that she had tricked him, he went again to her house. When he knocked at the door the goat bleated, 'I have eaten the grass and triumphed over you'. This time the wolf tried to tempt her with oranges growing in a place he knew about. As before she enquired as to where the place was, and went to it earlier than agreed. When he arrived at the place, he saw her at the tree. Then he said, 'This is a black day for you, you shan't escape from me'. On hearing this she threw an orange into the distance, and while he was running to get it she escaped home.

Then the wolf decided to make another attempt by asking the goat to invite him inside her house. She agreed, and told him to enter through a hole in the roof. While he was climbing she put a bathful of boiling water underneath the hole in the roof, and when the wolf jumped he found himself scalded and stuck in the hot water. He entreated the goat to rescue

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him, but she left him there to die, and henceforth she lived in peace and tranquillity.[1]

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XI

There was once a scabby boy who was an orphan (literally one who had eaten all his relations), except for an uncle with whom he was living. The uncle had a wife who was in love with another man, and the scabby boy knew about this affair while the uncle did not.

One day the boy left his uncle in the field and went home unexpectedly, hiding himself behind the door. The lover came to see his uncle's wife, who told him that she would cook him a chicken and leave it on the shelf, and that he could help himself to it late that night. After the boy had heard this he went to the farm and resumed his work after making excuses to his uncle for his absence. When the scabby boy and his uncle returned home in the evening the wife offered them millet bread and salt for their meal. Just before they started eating, a cat came along, and the boy pinched it till it howled in pain. The uncle asked the boy why the cat was screaming, and the latter replied, 'The cat says there is a cooked chicken on the shelf'. Then the uncle went by himself to the shelf, and on discovering the chicken asked his wife why she had not placed it before them. She apologized, saying that she had completely forgotten it.

This plot of the wife promising the lover special food which he could fetch at night, of the boy overhearing what was said, and of the uncle asking about what the cat said on her screaming, went on for several days, and on every occasion the wife managed to give good excuses for not offering her husband the good food. The lover, however, began to think that the woman was deceiving him, but she told him what was happening and they decided to kill the cat. On the following day the woman promised her lover a turkey which she would hide in the chaff. The boy overheard this also, and when the uncle returned home, he was offered the usual millet loaf and salt. Then suddenly the boy told his uncle that he had forgotten to give the cow its evening feed, and went to the barn, and delved into the chaff until he had uncovered the turkey. He dashed back to his uncle, telling him that he had found a turkey but that he was not sure whether it was dead or alive. The uncle went to see about this, and on his finding the turkey violently rebuked his wife, who again excused herself on the ground that she had forgotten about it.

The lover became more annoyed than ever, and the wife agreed with him this time to take a cooked ram to his farm. But as she did not know the whereabouts of her lover's farm he decided to show her the way by scattering chaff along the path to his farm. Again the boy overheard this, and he removed the chaff and scattered the lover's trail, making one lead-

[1] If the nanny-goat symbolizes 'the child', then this story interpreted on the reductive level (infantile situations) represents an Oedipus situation where the child kills the father (wolf), and lives in peace in the house (mother), or according to Erich Fromm it could be representative of male-female conflict.

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ing to his uncle's farm. The woman took the ram and followed the trail, but to her bewilderment she found herself at her husband's farm.

The wife then decided to poison both the uncle and the boy, and while she was telling her lover about it, the boy again overheard her. He went straight to the drug seller and requested him that if his uncle's wife came to buy poison from him, he should tell her the dried yoke of eggs and advise her to sprinkle it over the cooked chickens which should be eaten for dinner every evening during the next week, and that this device would bring more decisive results than ordinary poison by the end of the week. The boy told his uncle about the plot, and they agreed to pretend to be dead at the end of the week.

On their supposed death, people began wailing, whilst the lover came to console the wife, he also told her, 'We are triumphant now, you are the mare and I am the horse'. Then the boy woke his uncle, saying, 'Wake up uncle, before the horses trample on you'. The uncle arose immediately, and murdered both his wife and her lover.

XII

Once upon a time there was a barren wife who had always longed for a daughter, and she took a vow that if she had one she would call her 'Hab-al-ruman'. After she had borne a daughter she became jealous of her, and used to ask the moon on its appearing every night, 'Who is prettier, I or Hab-al-ruman?' The moon's answer was invariably 'Hab-al-ruman'. As the mother felt snubbed by such an answer, she decided to get rid of her daughter, of whom she was so terribly jealous; she thereupon handed her over to an old woman telling her to abandon her on the mountains.

It so happened that after a short time the young daughter was rescued by the Sultan's son, who took her to his palace and looked after her. Meanwhile, the mother repeatedly asked the moon the same question, and the moon insisted on giving the same answer. At last she asked the moon where her daughter was, and on learning that she was in the Sultan's palace, she gave an old hag some poison to rub between her daughter's fingers on shaking hands with her in the palace. One day when the Sultan's son came to the palace, he found Hab-al-ruman dead. He then placed her in a chest, filling a similar chest with gold, and ordered the two chests to be left in the mountains. The 'ghool' and the 'silowas' were passing along one day through the mountains and found the two chests; Hab-al-ruman's chest fell to the ghool, who, on opening it, found this beautiful dead girl, and began to wash her for burial. But during the washing, as the ghool was rubbing between the girl's fingers, she suddenly came to life. The ghool looked after her until she grew up, and married her to a royal prince. By the Prince she had a boy whom the ghool snatched away. The Prince was grieved, and his grief became heavier after the ghool had snatched away a second and later a third son. At last the Prince

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could bear it no longer, and accused his wife of being an ogress—a silowa who ate her children. To find consolation the Prince decided to perform his pilgrimage, and before he left for Mecca he asked his wife what gifts she would like from the Holy Places, and was surprised to learn that her request was for two boxes, one filled with sabbar, and the other with henna.

On his return from the Higaz, the Prince decided to take another wife who might bear him children who would survive. This made the heart of his wife heavy and she would open the box of sabbar chanting 'Oh, sabbar, give me patience, oh, henna, let the ghool have mercy on me'.[1] The Prince went forward with the preparations for his marriage, and while the ceremony was being publicly announced, and the people sending in their gifts, the ghool surreptitiously brought the Princess's three sons back to their mother. Immediately the children started looking into the cooking utensils in which meat was being cooked for the occasion, but the servants pushed them away, preventing them from getting any meat out of the utensils. The boys were annoyed and exclaimed, 'This is strange; the food belongs to our father, yet servants prevent us from eating'.[2] Then the children's mother told them to go and snatch the razor from the barber who was ceremonially cutting their father's hair. Having done this, the sons began running towards their mother, followed closely by the Prince who enquired about the boys. The mother told him, 'These are your sons who were with their grandfather, the ghool, who brought them up and has now sent them back to see their father's wedding'. The Prince was overjoyed on the return of his sons, and went out to the gathering accompanied by his sons and cried aloud, 'O men, those of you who love the chosen Prophet can turn the wedding into a circumcision ceremony'.[3]

XIII

Once upon a time a childless woman prayed to God to give her a boy, even as small as a billy-goat's bob tail, and her prayers were answered. One day the bob tail (the little boy) hid himself in the grass, and was eaten by his father's cow. But one day, while the cow was about to turn the water wheel, the bob tail, who was now in her belly, said 'Hush', and thus stopped the cow from turning. The bob tail's brother told his father about the cow. But the latter did not believe him, and accused him of lying, and drowned him in the well. The father then asked his daughter to attend to the turning of the water wheel, but she also complained of the cow in the same way as her brother, and met the same fate by being drowned in the well. This time it was the father himself who attended to the water wheel, and realized that his children's complaint about the cow was true, and he decided to sell the cow to a butcher.

[1] In Arabic the phrases are 'Ya sabbar, sabbir kalbi, Ya henna, hannini al ghool 'alaf'.
[2] The exclamation phrases in Arabic make a rhyme: 'al 'aish 'aish abouna, wal khadam yutruduna.'
[3] This also rhymes: 'Alli yihib annabi al mukhtar, yikhib azzwag tahar.'

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When the butcher had slaughtered the animal, he distributed it amongst the customers, one of whom, a woman, bought the tripe out of which came the bob tail. The woman was terrified of this emerging ghost and left the tripe, which the bob tail then took to his mother.

On another occasion the bob tail hid himself behind a tree, whilst a gang of thieves were distributing their booty, whereupon he appeared suddenly, frightening them away. He was thus left alone to collect the booty, which he took to his mother.[1]

XIV

There was a family of seven brothers and their sister, whose paternal cousins, a brother and a sister, lived in another house. The seven brothers were poor, while the cousin was rich, and out of envy the brothers wished to do away with their cousin, but later they changed their minds and decided to abandon him in the mountains. One night they carried him off to the mountains and tied him to the back of a tigress who was with young. Then they brought the girl cousin to their house with all the wealth that her brother possessed. After a short time the tigress gave birth to a cub, and passed frequently through the village on her way to the Nile roaring, 'Ay, ay, there is a son of Adam on my back; ay, ay, O sons of Adam, come and release him'. As this roaring was heard every time the tigress passed through the village, the brothers realized the danger in store for them by these threats of the tigress, who might attack them at any moment, and so decided to release their cousin. One night they went out to the mountains with their knives, cut their cousin from the tigress' back, and returned home with him.

The unfortunate man's sister found her brother in a deplorable state of health, as worms were coming out of his back, and the rest of his body was full of wounds. She therefore locked him in a room, and determined that she must make a great effort to restore his health. She used to slaughter a ram for him every day, and by doing so his health gradually improved. Feeling better, her brother asked her one day to fetch in a sword to take his revenge on his cousins, but she insisted that he was not yet fit for such a task as he could not lift on his back a sack full of sand. The sister went on feeding her brother on his daily ram, and a month later, he succeeded in carrying the sack, thus proving that he had completely regained his strength, and was let out of the room.

One day, a short time after his release from his confinement, the cousin attacked the seven brothers while they were eating and killed them all, but while he was about to slay their sister, his own sister intervened, and told him that she would be his future wife.

The cousins were married, but the wife could not forget what had happened to her brothers, and wanted to have revenge on her husband's

[1] Here one can also detect a pattern of an Oedipus story.

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sister. With this aim in view, she hid two sparrows' eggs in her sister-in-law's porridge, who after eating it, became pregnant, bringing forth two sparrows.

The two sparrows, intimidated by their mother, continually pestered their uncle's wife. Hostilities reached their climax when one day, while the latter was sieving the corn, the sparrows came to scatter it all over the ground. Every time she said 'Hish, hish', to drive them away, they answered back, 'Hish to you, may your face be removed'.[1]

The husband, on his wife's complaint, decided to get rid of the sister, who had to leave her brother's home and wander with her two sparrow sons. One day she found a palace, and under its shade she rested, while her sparrow sons went gathering food for her. On looking out of his palace, the Prince saw this beautiful woman, whom he let into the palace and decided to marry her. And by him she had two daughters.

One day, while her brother was hunting in the mountains, he came to this palace where his sister was living. On asking for hospitality from the palace the brother was recognized by the sister, but he did not know her until she told him who she was. She offered him food and showed him her daughters as well as her sparrow sons. He was deeply touched and decided to take his sister back home, and to get rid of his wife who was the cause of their separation. The brother confessed his guilt to his sister, and told her that after all it was she who had prevented him from killing the girl who was now his wife, along with her brothers. The brother and his sister returned and settled in their home, and lived happily ever after.

XV

Jiha was one night sleeping outside his house, and on waking in the morning he found that his bed blanket, in which he had tied his money, had been stolen.[2] Jiha was very upset and waited until winter to attempt to get back his cover. On a very cold night in the following winter he invited all the village people, old and young, to a ceremonial oath-meal, for which he slaughtered a bull.

People came along; everybody wrapping himself up in the thickest blanket he possessed. Jiha himself began distributing the meat, scanning each guest; if the guest were old, Jiha would say, 'Oh, you don't need meat, you have eaten enough meat in your life', and if the guest were young he would say, 'Oh, you don't need meat, you will have many other chances in your life to eat meat'. In this way he went round with the meat until he discovered the man who had stolen his blanket; this he seized, and then asked everybody to be off, saying, 'You may go away now, it's only Jiha himself who deserves his own beef'.

[1] In Arabic it is a rhyming phrase: 'Hish tihishak, wi tagla wishak.'

[2] Jiha is a symbol of an insignificant and ridiculous person. In the Cairo dialect he is referred to as 'Goha'.

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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

XVI

*859 539 Jiha had a bull which he was fattening up to sell in the market. He took great pride in this, making great show of it in the village, boasting about the money he would get from the bull. Everyone asked Jiha to say, when he used to boast about his future wealth, that he would get it 'if God wills' (insha Allah). On each occasion Jiha replied: 'There is no need to add this phrase, because the bull is mine, and God has nothing to do with all this; I shall sell the bull and get the money, whether God wills it or not'.

On market day Jiha was eagerly looking forward to selling his bull and declared ostentatiously that from now on he would become a rich man. People again advised him to say 'if God wills', but he refused to comply. He sold his bull at last, putting his money in his pocket. A thief had been watching him, and deftly stole the money.

Jiha went off to buy some new clothes, swaggering and puffed up with conceit. When he put his hand in his pocket to pay the merchant he found that his money had gone. Then people came to ask Jiha about his money, and his reply was, 'If God wills, I have lost it'.

XVII

Jiha had a fat bull which did not allow anybody to enter the house without trying to toss him. Jiha's wife could not bear the bull's presence in the house, and repeatedly asked her husband to sell it. But Jiha insisted that he would not dispose of it unless green grass grew on the bull's back. One day Jiha's mother-in-law came into the house and the bull kicked her and broke her leg. The wife became more furious, and asked other people's advice concerning her husband's bull. An old woman advised her that instead of filling her water jar with water from the Nile, to fill it with earth and green grass from the field, and to put it on the bull's back. This she did, and the following morning she woke her husband telling him to get ready to sell the bull as the green grass had grown on the bull's back. Then Jiha asked his wife to heat him some water for his bath, and to prepare his tea before he went to the market in a nearby town.

Jiha took the bull to the market, but on his way he heard the voice of a man calling out, 'Oh, you, the owner of that billy-goat, come here'. Jiha pretended not to hear this remark and passed on. But the chief of the robbers (for such he was) ordered three of his gang to fetch Jiha and his bull. The three robbers went off and brought Jiha to the Chief who reprimanded him for not obeying his orders instantly. Jiha apologized, saying that he thought that the Chief's words were not directed to him as he had a bull and not a billy-goat. Anyhow, the thieves killed the bull, cutting it up into sixty pieces, and each one having a piece. Jiha entreated the robber chief to give him the tail of his bull as his share, which the Chief did. On his return home, Jiha told his wife about the thieves and how he managed to keep only the bull's tail. The wife set up a wailing,

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putting dust on her head, and taking the blame upon herself, because she had nagged him to sell the animal.

Jiha, however, was determined to revenge himself on the thieves, so one day he disguised himself in an old woman's dress, and repaired to the thieves' cave. It was night, and the thieves were just going out on their expedition, when they met this old woman whom they asked to come into their cave to entertain their father who was a very weak old man. Jiha was taken round the cave by the old man after the thieves had gone. He showed special interest in a type of garroting machine, and asked the old man how it worked. The latter began to demonstrate, and put his neck into the noose, whereupon Jiha lost no time in pulling the rope and half-strangling the old man, beating him meanwhile with the bull's tail, which was studded with nails. During the beating Jiha called out, 'I am not a woman as you see me, I am the owner of the bull'. After taking whatever he could lay his hand on, Jiha returned to his wife, and told her what he had done with the thieves' father.

On their return, the thieves found their father in a very poor way, and intended taking him to a medicine man. The next evening Jiha appeared in the disguise of a medicine man, declaring in front of the cave his unusual powers in treating all kinds of illnesses. He was taken into the cave to see the sick man. After consulting the stars and his beads, he told them that their sick father needed the milk of a deer which had only borne one offspring. As this was a rare animal, all the sons went out in various directions in search of the prescribed type of deer. When Jiha was sure that the thieves were a long way from the cave, he took out the bull's tail which was studded with nails, and started beating the old man again, saying to him, 'I am not a medicine man, I am the owner of the bull'. Then he asked him where the treasure was kept, and on being told he unlocked the door and helped himself to as much of the gold and silver he found there as he could carry.

On the following day Jiha asked one of his friends who was a fast runner, to go to the thieves' cave and announce that he was the owner of the bull. Jiha then followed his friend who, on announcing that he was the owner of the bull, ran away and was chased by all the sixty thieves. When Jiha, who was hiding, was sure that the thieves were well away, he entered the cave, gave the old father another beating with the bull's tail, and took away the rest of the thieves' wealth. As the thieves could not catch Jiha's friend whom they had pursued for a long distance, they returned home only to find their father dying, and their booty gone. Jiha went home to his wife, proud of the fact that although he had lost the bull, he had gained riches which were a hundred times more valuable.

XVIII

Jiha had a lame donkey which made him an object of ridicule throughout the whole village, but particularly from one of his neighbours. Jiha

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decided to retaliate by ridiculing his neighbour and making a fool of him. So one day, he inserted five pieces of gold into his lame donkey's rectum, and took it to drink from the canal. After the donkey had drunk the water it defaecated, dropping the gold pieces, which had been inserted.[1] Then those who were around were astonished, and every one of them wanted to buy Jiha's donkey which defaecated gold, but Jiha preferred to sell it to his neighbour. The next day, the neighbour discovered that Jiha had deceived him, for the donkey did not defaecate any gold. Jiha's answer to this accusation was that the donkey became sterile owing to some black magic.

Some time later Jiha agreed with his wife to pretend to beat her, so much so that she would fall to the ground, feigning death; whereupon he would blow a whistle which would bring her to life again. Then, on hearing about this, everybody in the village wanted to buy Jiha's whistle, but he sold it to his neighbour. One day the neighbour was angry with his wife and beat her so thoroughly that she died. He then tried to bring her to life by blowing Jiha's whistle, but nothing happened. Raging with fury, the neighbour decided to kill Jiha, and so revenge himself. Anticipating this, Jiha pretended to be dead and was buried in a grave, taking a sharp razor with him. But the neighbour decided to get down into the grave to make sure that Jiha was really dead. As he was entering the grave, Jiha pulled him down into it and cut him to pieces with his razor, and in this way, Jiha triumphed over them all.

[1] For a psycho-analytical interpretation of symbols, the connection here between defaecation (faeces) and gold is worth noting.

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882 men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find
883 difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please
[834] her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage
882 by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguish-
[304] able from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a
[302] special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her
[301] ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

883 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in
539 singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance
533 boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field.

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Appendix Five

THE WOMAN WHO SPEAKS IN KORANIC QUOTATIONS[7/A]

ABDULLAH IBN AL-MUBARAK relates: 'I intended to perform my pilgrimage one year, so I joined the caravan that was going to Mecca. On the way I overslept one night, only to find on my awaking that the caravan had left. While pursuing the caravan, I found a woman who had also lost her way. On my enquiring her name, she answered, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—and mention Mary in the Book".[1] So I knew that her name was Mary (Mariam). I offered her food, but she refused, saying, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God".[2] As I understood that she was fasting, I recited to her, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days".[3] To this she replied, "In the name of God . . . and that you fast is better for you if you know". Then I asked her whether she wanted to ride on my camel, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . and whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the Garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly".[4] So I knew she wanted to ride, so I made the camel kneel for her to mount, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . say to the believing men that they cast down their looks, and guard their private parts: that is pure for them: surely Allah is aware of what they do".[5] Immediately I knew that she desired me to be modest, so I turned away my face while she mounted. While I was urging the camel to get up, she quoted, "In the name of God . . . Glory to Him who made this subservient to us, and we were not able to do it".[6] On the way I asked her whether she had any children and her answer was, "In the name of God . . . and mention Abraham in the Book: surely he was a truthful man, a Prophet".[7] "O John (Yahya), take

[1] Koran, xix, 16.
[2] Koran, ii, 184.
[3] Koran, xxiv, 30.
[4] Koran, xix, 41.
[5] Koran, xix, 26.
[6] Koran, iv, 124.
[7] Koran, xliii, 13.

7/A [For commentary on this story, see category 116, p.93-Gemler]

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788 hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a
539 child."[1] "And to Moses, Allah addressed His word, speaking (speaking to him)."[2] So I understood that she had three boys by the names of Ibrahim, Yahya, and Mousa. On asking her how her sons were occupied she replied, "In the name of God . . . and landmarks: and by the stars they find the right way".[3] So I knew that they worked as guides on the desert routes. We went on conversing till sunset, when I offered her food to break her fast, and in gratitude, she said, "In the name of God . . . and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged".[4]

'In the morning we reached Mariam's home, and I met her three sons,
[574] who thereupon killed a ram, offering me a grand repast. Mariam herself invited me to eat, reciting, "In the name of God . . . eat and drink pleasantly for what you did".[5] Before I left their place, I asked her sons the reason for their mother's talking thus, always quoting from the Koran. They told me that, one day, while she was reading the Holy Book she came across the text, "He utters not a word, but there is by him a watcher at hand".[6] She immediately took a vow not to utter any statement from that time on which was not in the Koran, for fear of fa[illegible] to sin.

'The following year, I went to call on Mariam at her hou[illegible] and on finding her sons there, enquired about their mother. They told me she was on her death-bed. This saddened me, so I received permission to approach her, and drawing near her asked how she felt. She answered, "In the name of God . . . and the stupor of death will come in truth: that is what you shunned".[7] I remained at her side until she died, and then we washed her, wrapped her in her shroud, prayed over her, and buried her. I stayed alone beside her grave, and when night fell, I called out to her, "What has God done to you, Mariam?" I heard a faint voice answering as if from a distance, "In the name of God . . . and reward them, because they were patient, with Garden and silk".

'Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor the intense cold. And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass.

'(Transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure.

'And they shall be made to drink therein a cup, the admixture of which shall be ginger.

'(Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil.

'And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them, you will think them to be pearls, scattered, broadcast.

[1] Koran, xix, 12. [2] Koran, iv, 164. [3] Koran, xvi, 16.
[4] Koran, ii, 272. [5] Koran, lii, 19. [6] Koran, l, 18.
[7] Koran, l, 19.

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'And when you see these, you shall see blessings, and a great kingdom.

'Upon them shall be garments of fine green silk and thick silk interwoven with gold, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall make them drink a pure drink.

'Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed.'[1]

[1] Koran, xii, 21.

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Appendix Six

SOME PROVERBS CURRENT IN THE VILLAGE

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[197]

BESIDES those proverbs mentioned in the main text of the thesis the following are specimens of proverbs in the village dialect. It is to be noted here that some of the Prophet's sayings as well as some Koranic statements are occasionally quoted in a proverbial sense, especially by literate people. For a compendium of Arabic proverbs, see J. L. Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, London, 1930; and for the colloquial Egyptian proverbs, especially in towns and cities, see M. Taimour, *al-Amthal al-'Amia* (Colloquial Proverbs), Cairo, 1950 (in Arabic).

Alli ma 'indush ma yilzamush.
He who has not, need not give.

Shatlak wala yidurrak.
What you plant shall never harm you.

Walad batny yiaraf ratny.
The son of my womb knows my language (lingo).

Nas ti'akkir wi nas tseed.
Some disturb the waters, others fish in them.

Kul shai gismah wi naseeb.
Everything is destined and is thus one's lot.

Alli yimil gantara lazim yithammal addoas.
He who makes a bridge of himself must bear the treading. (Said about a person who assumes the role of leadership with its concomitant responsibilities.)

'Ind ashadaid t'uraf al ikhwan (class. Arabic).
Adversities are the test of brothers (or friends).

Khisla fi al abai yarithuha al abnai (class. Arabic).
A trait in the fathers is inherited by their sons.

Addonia himal.
Life is burdensome.

Addahab yihtaj li annukhal.
Gold requires the bran (wherein it can be hidden and preserved). (In other words the leaders of people need the support of the led and the less distinguished of their people.)

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Annas bi annas.
People can live through co-operating with, and consideration for, others (said to sanction the exchange of social obligations). 539

Alli yisheel girbah tnaggit alaih.
He who carries a water-skin must expect to get wet (or to get some water slopped on him).

Mid ryjlak 'ala gadr ghatak.
Stretch your legs according to the size of your blanket. (Cut your coat according to your cloth.)

Kulluh indal Arab saboon.
It is all soap for the Arabs (said for those who cannot discriminate in matters of clothes, food or social matters).

Alli y'ieeb, y'ieeb fi nafsu.
He who insults others, insults himself.

Min jawar al-haddad yibla bi naru.
He who is a neighbour of a blacksmith must suffer from the furnace.

Addunia bi khairha.
There is still goodwill on earth (when someone becomes suspicious of others).

Man taradda bi ridai lam yatraddah abeeh, yati 'alaih zaman yatamanna al moat feeh.
He who wears a robe that his father did not wear before him will witness a day in which he would desire death.

Annasab nashab wa in sah yibga ahliyah.
Marriage may bring wealth, and if it succeeds may become like kinship bonds.

Naseeb wa 'azz an-nasab, wi gaid himartu 'azz min al-walad.
My son-in-law is very much admired, and the rope that tethers his donkey is dearer to me than my son (said by mother-in-law).

Addukhool fi as shibak hain, at-tammul fi al-khurooj.
Getting entangled is easy, the difficulty is getting out.

Bab yijeeb ar-reeh, siduh wi astareeh.
A door lets in the wind, better close it and be comfortable. (It is better to prevent causes of friction.)

Iz ligeet ghadir fi tareeg wadi gul laih attareeg ma'ak.
If you meet a stray person in the desert, tell him that he is following the correct route.

Asseet wala al ghina.
Have reputation rather than wealth.

Ma ynoub alli yihajjiz illa tagtei hdoumoh.
The mediator trying to separate the two opponents would gain nothing but torn clothes.

Khud ma ataak wa atruk ma fatak.
Take what is coming and abandon what is past.

Ya ma nas marmar 'atabha, sakanu luhoud at taraib.

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539 Many were the people whose thresholds were made of marble, but who had to be buried in dust.

Alli yibus fi balawi ghairuh, tilhoun 'alaih balaweeh.
He who considers other people's sufferings, would alleviate his own.

Aih yakhud ar reeh min al balaat.
What can the wind scour from floor paving? (You cannot get blood out of a stone.)

Min 'ashar al goam arbaeen yom, ya sar, ya asbah minhum.
He who associates with a group of people for forty days would then either depart, or become one of them.

Alli laih kabeer ma yendaribshy 'ala dahru.
He who has a patron would not have his back beaten.

Alli maloosh kabeer yishtari laih kabeer.
He who has no patron should find one (lit. buy one).

Kul fula wi laha kayyal.
Every kind of bean has a special person to appreciate it (lit. assess it).

Kul sagtah wi laha lagtah.
Everything that falls has got a gatherer.

Al 'ajalah min ashaitan.
Haste is of the devil.

Yinfa'ak dahabak das, wi waladak min dahrak bas, wi tourak min bagarak.
You can only rely on your hidden gold, your child descending from your loins and your calf from your cow.

Sahib balain kaddab, sahib talatah mundfig.
He who has two minds is a liar, he who has three is a hypocrite (usually said about a person who marries more than one wife).

Al khaly yigool 'ads.
The one who is indifferent would say it is lentils (said to a person who tries to underestimate the difficulties of another). The proverb is related of a person who committed adultery in the fields during harvest time; he was pursued by another. During his flight he gathered a handful of lentils. On being caught he was asked why he was pursued; his answer was that because he had stolen a handful of lentils. Yet the pursuer said, 'Of course those who have not seen what he did would say it is a handful of lentils'.

Girat haz wala faddan shatarah.
A small amount of luck (a 'kirat' is one twenty-fourth of a feddan) is better than a lot of hard work (feddan).

Al jahil 'adow nafsu.
The child is the enemy of himself (his own well-being).

[538] For a study of proverbs and proverbial statements, see Edward Westermarck, *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930. From our list of proverbs we have omitted also those included in this book, e.g. 'Learning is better than goods; 'When the bull falls down, the daggers are many'; 'What the

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eye does not see, the heart does not grieve for;' 'The funeral is great, and the deceased is a dog';[1] 'He fasted and fasted and breakfasted on an onion,'[2] etc. 539

No attempt at any theoretical study of proverbs or any kind of classification has been made here. Reference can be made to the masterly way that Westermarck has treated the subject throughout his work, especially in the Introductory Essay. 538

Here we can only point to the fact emphasized by Westermarck, that a people's proverbs cannot be taken as indicative of their character without full knowledge of other facts that the proverbs do not state.[3]

[1] It is 'mouse' in Morocco.
[2] In Morocco it is 'He remained fasting for a year and breakfasted on snails'.
[3] For examples see Westermarck, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–4.

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Appendix Seven

BOYS' RIDDLES

(mainly in the adolescent stage)

539 524 'One measure of clover covering this world and the hereafter.'
Answer: (Stars.)

'Something which looks like a man's covering which is woven neither by a Moslem nor by a Christian.'
(Loofah.)

'How many cups are in the sea?'
(The sea is that of knowledge and contains four cups which are the four schools of Moslem theology: the schools of Malik, Al Shafii, Abu Hanifa, and Ibn Hanbal.)

'How many "Kintars" are there in the "mountain"?'
(The mountain here is the Koran, so the mountain contains 114 'Kintars', as the Koran consists of 114 chapters.)

'How many "Kasabas"[1] are there in the universe?'
(There are fourteen 'Kasabas' in the universe: seven heavens and seven earths.)

'A tree that contains twelve branches and on every branch there are thirty leaves.'
(The lunar year—in fact, however, the lunar months are of thirty and twenty-nine days alternately.)

'Riding his mother and protected by his father.'
(The bullet in a gun.)

'A cripple who walks, a blind man who sees, a barren person who is pregnant, if she continues to be thirsty she survives, and with her the child she bears, but if she drinks, she dies and with her dies her child.'
(The laden boat at sea.)

'A boy and his sister, and a wife and her husband, amongst whom one distributes three oranges, each one getting a whole orange.'
(The sister of the boy is at the same time the husband's wife.)

'There was a wolf, a ram and some clover, and a man wanted to take

[1] A Kasaba is a length measure of 355 centimetres.

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them across from one side of the river to the other, provided he takes only one of them at a time. How could he manage that without losing any of these things, e.g. letting the wolf eat the ram, or the ram eat the clover?' 539 524

(He takes the ram first to the other bank and leaves it there. Then takes the wolf, leaving it there, taking the ram back with him to where it was. Then takes the clover across to the other side, leaving it beside the wolf, and returning to fetch the ram.)

'Our white camel scatters its feeding-stuff,
Our black camel gathers its feeding-stuff.'

(White camel is daytime when people disperse for work, whereas the black camel represents night when people gather for chatting.)

'The land is white, the sowing seeds are black, the cows are five, and the plough is one.'

(This is a representation of the hand (five fingers) writing in ink (black sowing seeds) with a pen (one plough) on a white sheet of paper (white land).)

'A boy with scabies rubs his head on another scabby head, and from too much rubbing the heads fall down piece by piece.'

(The upper and lower stones of a handmill grinding flour.)

'Ninety knights who run in one vessel.'

(The two wheels of the water-wheel, the upper horizontal wheel containing fifty teeth, and the lower vertical one containing forty, and both being in the well.)

'A white billy-goat, with red ears.'

(The 'maktaf' (basket) made of whitish palm-tree leaves, with two handles made of brownish palm-tree fibre.)

'Shakes his head while filling his belly.'

(The spindle.)

'Abuyah kitir malu
'ala akhti katabnalu
al bit jabat walad ya zein af'alu
baga abuyah[1] wibn akhti wana khalu.'
'Abuyah has plenty of money.
We've got him wed to my sister.
She had a child, who's done himself well.
He's the brother of Yah (Akhuyah), he's my cousin and I'm his maternal uncle.'

(Here the play is on the words Abuyah (first line) and Akhuyah (fourth line), where the former word means 'Father of Yah' and 'my father' and the latter word means 'brother of Yah' and 'my brother'.)

[1] [apparently this should read Akhuyah --analyst]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
774 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).

789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. "In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

●[539]

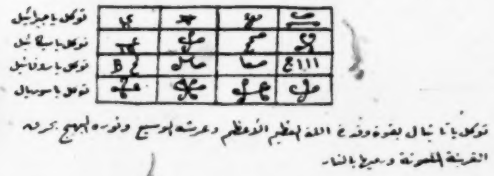

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told: "Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
779 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother), but

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845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation :-

[539]

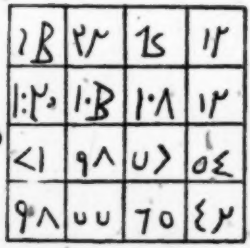

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

" Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds : " Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache : " Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes " Hell is hot " ; on the second " Hell is cold " ; on the third " Hell is thirsty " ; and on the fourth " Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

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The Work of Women is better than that of Men; or, the Ideas of Women are Superior to those of Men

Once upon a time a judge had a wife who was always telling him that he invariably gave judgment in favour of men and never of women. To this accusation the judge replied, "Oh, my dear wife, I think that women are very inferior to men; they are always in need of our help."

As the judge continued to pay no attention to what his wife said, she became angry with him, and said to herself, "I will find a way in which to punish my husband."

[269] So one day the wife told her husband to buy some meat and a melon for dinner. After she had prepared these things a friend came, and she offered *him* the meat for his dinner and cooked some lentils for her husband's meal, to take the place of the meat which she had given to her friend. She then cut out the inside of the melon and poured water inside the rind, which had been left whole. She brought also some fish and put them inside the melon-rind in the water.

When her husband came to take his dinner as usual she brought him the lentils.

He was much surprised when he saw this, and said to her, "What is the matter? I bought meat, not lentils."

So she said to him, "This is all that you bought; you must eat it." So he ate.

After he had eaten the lentils she took a knife and began to cut the melon into pieces, and then started laughing. Her husband said, "What is the matter with you?" She replied, "My dear husband, you must come and see the fish which are in this melon."

The man was very surprised to see such a curious thing, and he went outside his house, where there were some people sitting, and said to them, "I have bought a melon inside which there are fish. I shall invite you to eat some of these fish to-morrow."

The next day he sent out his invitations to the people who had promised to dine with him on the fish. When the guests arrived he said to his wife, "Bring the fish!" So she came forward and said, "O my husband, do fish live in melons? What is the matter with you? O people, you must perceive that the judge has become mad!" So they took him to the asylum and made some one else judge in his place.

When they asked the poor man every day the names of the days of the week he repeated them correctly, but when they asked him, "Where do fish live?" he replied, "Fish live in melons."

One day the woman went to visit her husband and said to him, "When they ask you 'Where do fish live?' you must say, 'They live in water, in ponds and rivers and lakes.'" Then they let him go free, and when he arrived at his house the people came to salute him.

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One night his wife said, " I can make you judge again and make the other judge mad ! " She then told him that he must go to the market and buy some milk. So he went and bought it. Then she said, " We are going to invite the new judge to eat with us, and I am going to tell you something that you must say. When I hang a bag of skin filled with milk on your neck, I shall milk you, and you must make a noise such as buffaloes make." So her husband said, " Very well, I will do so."

The woman invited the new judge, and when he came to the house she began to laugh, saying, " I am going to milk my husband, but I am ashamed to do this before you ! " The judge replied, " Are husbands milked ? " to which she answered, " Yes, they give good milk, and you are going to see it for yourself."

Then the woman called her husband and began to milk him from the skin which was concealed under his clothing. The new judge was very much astonished when he saw this, especially when he ate the food which she had prepared with the milk. After he had eaten he asked the wife, " How can a husband give milk ? " to which she answered, " If you wish to be milked you must go to a street which leads to the market, and then you must take off all your clothes and begin to eat grass. When anyone speaks to you do not reply, but make a noise like a buffalo. After that you will give good milk."

So he went and carried out her instructions. While he was thus engaged the inhabitants of the town passed by and saw what he was doing. " What is the matter with you, O our judge ? " they asked. He did not answer them, but made a noise like a buffalo. Then they said that the judge had become mad, and they took him to the asylum and brought the old judge and restored him to his position.

The Two Shoes of Ḥenēn

Once upon a time there was a shoemaker whose name was Ḥenēn. An Arab came to him and wished to buy a pair of shoes, but they did not agree about the price, and quarrelled with each other, and Ḥenēn was much annoyed and desired to take his revenge on the Arab.

So when Ḥenēn learnt that the Arab was going to cross the desert he took a pair of shoes and went along the road on which he knew the Arab would go. As he went he put one of the shoes on the ground ; the other shoe he placed on the road a mile away from the first. Then he hid himself in a tree near where the second shoe lay.

When the Arab passed by the first shoe he said to himself that it was like Ḥenēn's shoe, and he left it on the ground and did not take it. He then went on his way till he found the second shoe a mile distant from the first. Whereupon he said to himself, " I must leave the camel here and go back to take the first shoe."

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539 So he went back. And after he had turned back, leaving his camel, Ḥenēn came down the tree and led the camel off to his house. When the Arab returned to the place where he had left his camel he found it had disappeared, so he took the pair of shoes and went to his house. When he arrived there his family said to him, "What have you brought?" He replied, "I have brought back the two shoes of Ḥenēn instead of the camel."

And this proverb, "I have returned with the two shoes of Ḥenēn," is quoted when anyone returns with small things in exchange for large ones.

The Shah of Persia and his Daughter

Once upon a time the Shah of Persia had a wife who gave birth to a very beautiful girl, and then died.

After many years the Shah said to his vizier, "I wish to marry again. I have two pairs of gold bracelets, and whichever woman can fit these bracelets on her wrists shall be my wife."

So the vizier called an old woman and told her to look for a girl on whom the bracelets could be fitted. The old woman sought for such a girl, but the only one she could find was the daughter of the Shah. She informed the Shah of this, so he sent for his daughter and asked her if she wished to marry him. The girl replied, "Very well, my father, I will marry you if you can pay my price." So the Shah asked his daughter what her price would be. The girl replied, "I want you to make for me a large golden cow."

So the goldsmiths came, and the daughter made a drawing of the cow, which she represented as having an empty belly. After the goldsmiths had made the cow she ordered them to make a lock in the belly of the cow. So the goldsmiths did as they were told.

Three days later the girl took water and bread with her and entered the belly of the golden cow and locked herself into it, for she was very much ashamed at the thought of a marriage with her father.

When the Shah sent a message to her to come and be married to him they sought for her everywhere, but could not find her.

The Shah, as he could not find her, waited for three months. Then his viziers aid to him, "What is the use of the golden cow which you caused to be made? We must sell it." So they offered it for sale, and the King of India bought it and took it to his house. At midnight, while he was sleeping, the girl who was in the belly of the golden cow came out to look for food and water, for the bread and water which she had taken with her were finished. While she was looking for food the King saw her and was much astonished, for she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. So he took hold of her and said, "Who are you? Are you a fairy or a human being?" The girl replied, "I am a human being; I am the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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daughter of the King of Persia." And she told him all that had happened.

Then he said to her, " I will marry you instead of one of my cousins. But I am about to travel to another country, for I have work to do there. While I am absent you must stay in the belly of the cow lest perchance one of the daughters of my uncle should hear of you and kill you. I will tell my mother to bring you food for every meal and to place it before the cow. When she departs, you can come out and eat as you wish."

Before he left the King brought his mother to see the cow and said to her, " Act kindly with the cow, as you act with me." So his mother said, " Will the cow eat ? " He replied, " Oh, it will eat, and you must put food before her for every meal, and leave the room as soon as you can, shutting the door behind you, or the cow will take cold and die." And he went on his way.

At midday the King's mother cooked meat and took it with a jar of water and put it in front of the cow, and left the room quickly and locked the door. After a while the girl came out of the cow and ate a good meal. Half an hour later the mother of the King returned to see what had happened, and found that the food had been eaten and the water drunk, and she said, " I must believe my son, for the cow has eaten the food which I placed in front of her."

Now the three daughters of the King's uncle saw that the King did not wish to take one of them to wife, and they said, " Surely he has found something inside the golden cow, and we must discover what it is." A day later the youngest girl went to the King's mother and asked her to give her the cow, so that her sisters might see it. But the King's mother refused. The next day the eldest girl went to the mother of the King and asked her for the cow. And the mother did not refuse this time, for, she said to herself, " It will be a shame to refuse twice." And she gave the cow to the girl, saying, " You must offer it food at every meal." And the girl said, " Very well," and took it to her home.

At midnight they brought the cow to a special place and made a fire under its belly to melt the gold. When the girl inside the cow felt the heat she came out, whereupon the three girls took hold of her and began to beat her severely, exclaiming, " Ah, you are going to marry, are you ? We will kill you." So they made a box and put her inside it and locked it and threw it into the sea.

At daybreak they returned with the cow to the King's house. Then the King's mother cooked food and put it in front of it. And after a while she went again to see what had happened. But she found that the cow had not eaten its food as usual. So she began to cry, fearing her son the King.

Next day the King returned home, and he asked his mother about the golden cow. His mother said, " I did my best with it." At supper they

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put food in front of the cow, and the King stood by to see the girl. But she did not come.

So he ordered some of his servants to boil a big cauldron full of water and had his mother brought to him, and he said, " I will put you in this boiling water if you do not tell me what has happened to my cow." So she told all that had happened.

Then the King resolved to kill the daughter who had taken the cow from his house. First he married her. The next day he struck her severely and bade her tell him what she had done with his cow. So she told him all that had happened. Then he took a sword and cut off her head, and also cut her body up into pieces. He then put the flesh in a basket and threw it inside the house of her parents and hanged her head on the door of their house.

Now a certain fisherman came at daybreak to the place where the box had been cast into the sea, and threw in his hook to catch fish. Finding that it was very hard to draw in his line, he took his clothes off and dived into the sea and found a big box. So he took it out and went to his house, where he opened it and found in it a very beautiful girl.

The girl asked him about his business, and the fisherman said to her, " I am a poor fisherman, and I have no business at all except fishing." So she told him that she was going to weave him beautiful clothes, and that he could sell these clothes and live on the proceeds.

One day she made a beautiful cloth, weaving into it an account of all her adventures, and then bade him go and sell it to the King of India. When the King saw it and read the writing which was on it he was very glad, and said to the fisherman, " If you will bring me the lady who made this cloth I will give you a great sum of money as a reward." So the fisherman went back and told the girl all that had happened to him. Then the girl was very happy and said, " Very well, you must take me with you." So the fisherman took her to the King of India, who, when he saw her, kissed her many times, and wept. And he gave the man a great sum of money as he had promised.

And he made a feast for forty days, and when this was ended he married the Princess of Persia.

The Story of a Brick-maker

Once upon a time the wife of a brick-maker said, " O God, give me a boy like a camel ! " So God heard her prayer and gave her a son like a camel.

The king of the city had seven beautiful daughters, and they went to see this boy who resembled a camel.

When they had departed the boy said to his mother, " I want to take the youngest daughter of the King as my wife." But his mother said,

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"O my son, you are a camel. How can you marry the daughter of a king?" Then he said, "Never mind. I am going to give you a golden tray and also cups of gold, and you must go to the house of the King and enter it and give them to the King's wife. If one of the doorkeepers speaks to you give him some money, but do not speak to anyone at all." 539

So the woman took the tray with the golden cups and entered the palace of the King, and placed them before his wife, and then went away without speaking a word.

The next day the camel gave his mother a beautiful table with golden dishes upon it, and said, "Go to the palace of the King and place these before his wife, but do not speak."

When the King came and saw these beautiful things he said to his wife, "If the woman comes again you must ask her what she wants."

So when the woman arrived on the third day the wife of the King said to her, "What do you want?" And she said, "I want your youngest daughter to be the wife of my son, the camel."

When the King came and heard this he was very much astonished, and he called his vizier and said to him, "How can I give my daughter to a camel? We must consult together on this matter for a while."

Then the vizier said to the King, "I think that the camel must be a rich and noble man, for he sends you such precious things, the like of which your Majesty does not possess. I think he must be very rich and that you may give your consent. But first you must name a high price for your daughter; if he agrees well and good, we will give her to him; but if he refuses it will be better for you to deny him his request."

So, when the mother went again to the palace she was told that the King approved of her request, but as a war had broken out between the King and another country and he needed money and arms he required that the son should bring one hundred camels loaded with guns and rifles as the price of his daughter's hand.

Then the mother went home and said to her son, "O my son, the King has asked me for such and such things, and you cannot possibly obtain them, for we are very poor. Your father is only a brick-maker, and we live in a cottage made of *būṣ*.[1] Whence can we get these things?" [342]

But the camel said, "Fear not, O my mother. Stay here till I come back." Then he went out and brought a rope and hung it in the doorway of his cottage, and told his mother to take an end of the rope in her hand and to walk to the King's palace. So his mother took hold of the rope and started on her way.

As she went along a number of camels, over two hundred in number, loaded with guns and rifles, followed, and when she reached the King's palace she offered them to the vizier. Then the vizier told the King that the mother of the camel had brought more than two hundred camels,

[1] Dried *dura*-stalks.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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● 539 "and," he continued, "I think, therefore, that we should give her your daughter to be her son's wife."

The King followed this counsel, and sent a message to the camel that he was ready to give him his young daughter. So the camel caused a notice to appear in the papers that he was about to marry the King's daughter, and he invited some of his friends and gave them a supper. After supper they went to the King's palace and brought the bride to the camel's house.

Then the camel placed a sword between him and his bride, and said to her, "I am going to show you a secret thing." Then he took off his skin, and, behold! he was a very beautiful fairy prince with golden hair.

At daybreak the mother of the bride made some nice biscuits for her daughter and also prepared a dish of macaroni, suspecting that the camel [262] would eat it instead of straw. When she came to her daughter to offer her these things, she asked her about the camel. The daughter said, "It is a camel, my mother, not a human being," and did not tell her mother what she had seen at night.

Before the camel went out he brought his wife a gold tray on which were golden dishes full of delicious food, and he ordered her to offer her mother some breakfast, which she was to take to the King's palace.

When the King saw these precious things he was much astonished, and said to his vizier, "Surely this camel is a very rich man; he always offers us precious things which we do not possess."

On the seventh day after the marriage, as is the custom to the present day, the King and his wife took some beautiful presents to offer to their daughter. When they reached the place they found that the cottage was burned down and that no one was to be seen. But the camel had taken his wife, his mother, and his father and had gone to a distant place, where, after he had prayed to God, a beautiful palace, built of gold and silver bricks and surrounded with flowers, arose upon the spot. The palace, also, was protected by a large number of soldiers. Then the camel took off his skin and became the prince of these parts.

After a while the King and his vizier wandered about, dressed as Arabs, trying to find the King's daughter. One day they were passing near the palace when they were observed by the Prince, who ordered one of his soldiers to bring in these strange men, who, he said, doubtless were thieves. And they were cast into prison.

After three days had passed the men were brought before the Prince, and he asked, "Where were you going?" The King and his vizier replied, "We have a daughter whom we married to a camel, and we are trying to find her." The Prince asked, "How can a camel marry a girl?" And the King answered, "I gave him my daughter."

While they were thus speaking the King's daughter looked out of a

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window, and her father saw her and recognized her, but he could not speak because he was in the presence of a prince.

Then the Prince said to the King, "I am the camel who took your daughter, but now I am a prince, and God made me what you see me."

So the King was full of joy, and the Prince became king in his stead. And that's all!

The King and the Story-teller

Once upon a time there was a king who had a story-teller. And this story-teller had a son and two daughters. Three years after the birth of the youngest child the story-teller died, but before his death he said to his son, "My son, if a poor man comes and wishes to marry one of your sisters give one to him if he is a noble and honest man. But if a rich man comes and asks for one of them, and he is not an honourable man, do not grant his request."

Now one day an Arab, who was an honourable man, came to the boy and asked him for one of his sisters. The boy said, "Very well, I will consider the matter, and will give you an answer in two days' time."

During the two days he made inquiries as to the man's character among the members of his tribe. They told him that the Arab was a thoroughly good man, but that he had no house and was living in a tent. So the boy went to the man and said, "I will give you one of my sisters, but first take £1000 and build a good house here." And after the house was built the boy gave the Arab more money to buy the furniture, and also some camels.

Three days later the marriage was celebrated, and the bridegroom made a great feast for the Arabs with the camels, which he had killed.

Next a rich man came and asked the boy if he might marry the other sister. The boy replied once again, "I will send you an answer in two days' time." As a result of his inquiries he learned that the man was very rich, but not honourable.

However, he said to himself, "Nevertheless, I will give my sister to him; I will then see what will happen." So he gave the girl to the rich man, thus disobeying his father's wishes.

A week later the boy wrote a letter to the King to whom his father had been story-teller and asked that he might be taken into the royal service. When he read it the King said, "Let the boy come here, for he is the son of my story-teller."

After a while the boy returned to his own home and said to his mother, "O my mother, my father, before he died, told me never to do good things to human beings, but to be kind and do good things to dogs. He also said that I must make friends of dogs, not of human beings."

Now the King had a fierce dog, and the boy was in the habit of giving this dog a fine pie every morning. The King had also a small gazelle,

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●539 of which he was very fond. One day the boy asked the keeper of the gazelle to accept some money from him and to give him the gazelle in exchange. So the boy took the gazelle and put it in a special place and brought a keeper to look after it. The next morning the King made inquiries for his gazelle, which had disappeared. A poor man, who was living near the house in which the gazelle was kept by the boy, went to the King and told him that his gazelle was in the house of a person whom the son of the story-teller had engaged to look after it.

So the King called the keeper to him and said, "I will cut off your head if you do not tell me about the man who stole my gazelle." On hearing this the man was very frightened, and said, "This boy [pointing to the son of the King's story-teller] who is sitting beside you brought it to me one day and ordered me to look after it." So the King said to the boy, "Why have you treated me in this way? Your father was a faithful man. I will tell my fierce dog to eat you."

Then they brought the dog to eat the boy. And when the dog came it began to jump and spring up at the boy, and licked his hands and played with him, and was overjoyed to be with him. When the King saw this he was very much astonished, and said, "What have you done to my dog?" The boy said, "I have done nothing at all, but my father told me to be always kind to dogs." Then the King forgave him.

But a week later the boy wished to test the words which his father had spoken to him. So he stole the gazelle a second time, and put it in a house in the city, and brought a man whom he ordered to look after it. The King was very angry when he heard that his gazelle was again lost. Three days later a man came and said to him, "O King, live for ever! I know the man who took the gazelle. He is the boy who is sitting beside you."

Then the King said to the boy, "Surely I will cut off your head in a week's time." But the boy begged the King to allow him to return to his own house in order that he might see his mother and his two sisters. And the King allowed him to go.

When the boy went back to his home he took some presents and went to the house of his sister who had married the Arab, and he told her and her husband about all that had happened to him. Then the Arab wept bitterly and said, "Surely I will ask the King to cut off my head instead of yours." But the boy said, "Never. I will not consent to such a thing," and left him.

A day later the boy went to the house of his other sister, who had married the rich man, and told her and her husband all that had happened. Then the husband said to the boy, "You are very bad, and your father and mother are also very bad. Why did you steal the King's gazelle? You deserve the punishment."

So the boy left him and went back to his mother's house. Three days

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later he returned to the King's palace as he had promised, and his rich brother-in-law and his Arab brother-in-law followed him. When they reached the palace the Arab came forward and said to the King, "O King, live for ever! you must cut off my head instead of this boy's." But the rich man said nothing. 539

Then the boy said to the King, "O King, live for ever! I will repeat three sayings to you before you cut off my head." And the King gave him leave.

So the boy began to speak, and he said, "My father gave me three pieces of advice, and I wished to test them. And the first is, 'You must do good to dogs, not to human beings'; the second is, 'Give your sisters to poor but honourable men'; and the third is, 'Do not give your sisters to rich and dishonourable men.' So I made a practice of giving a pie every morning to your fierce dog, and I stole your gazelle. Then you threw me to the dog to be eaten by him, but your dog remembered the kindness I had shown him, and he would not harm me, but licked my hands and played with me. The second saying I tested by giving one of my sisters to this poor, honourable man, and he came forward just now and wished to give his life for mine. The third I tested by giving my other sister to this rich and dishonourable man, and he blamed me much and never did me one good turn. Therefore I am between your hands, and it is for you to do with me as you wish."

Then the King said to the boy, "You are very clever." And he pardoned him and gave him a post of honour in his palace.

The Cat and the Rat

Once upon a time there was a rat that was very hungry. And while he was searching for food a cat met him. So he hid himself behind a pillar. And the cat said to him, "O rat, let us go and look after the hens." To which the rat replied, "My father told me never to trust or associate with one's enemy." Then the cat said to the rat, "My dear, I am a pilgrim, and I am wearing a large rosary, and I have made a vow to God that I will never injure any rat, and I pray all day long."

So the rat went to tell his mother what the cat had said. But his mother said, "O my son, do not go with your enemy, for your father told you never to do so." But the rat said, "O my mother, he is a pilgrim, and he has a large rosary hung over his neck, by which he counts his prayers." So his mother said, "Very well, you can go."

He then set off, and said to the cat, "It is all right, I will accompany you." Three days later the cat became very hungry, so he killed the rat and ate it.

The moral of this story is, Do not trust or associate with your enemy. [597]

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrîzi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Copts MR10

APPENDIX B

DIRGE FOR A YOUNG MAN

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1. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend, a friend
Who has passed his life in tears and lamentation.
Men and women, he who is absent has a friend whom he grieves,
Whom he wounds to the heart on a day most bitter.

2. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend who weeps,
Whose heart is wounded on a day of gloom.
Oh my delight, you who are gone were like green grass
Or a young pigeon whose feathers are not yet grown.

3. They told me he was ill. I went in to see him.
He lies unconscious, and around him there is wailing.
Very ill he is, and now the illness deepens,
And even the doctor can do no more for him.

4. Please God they will be sold in the market !
Come and buy them, you who are in need !
Please God they will be sold under the hammer !
Come and buy them, you who have no children !

5. "If I am long away, you must break my pen."
Yes, and your ink-well, my darling.
"If I am long away, break pen and pencil."
Yes, and your ink-well too, my dear.

6. At the news of their death, my dress gets tangled,
And the mistress of the harem loses her wits.
At the news of their death, my clothes are in disorder,
And the mistress of the harem out of her senses.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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7. The way to the church shall be strewn with roses ;
Please God they will come to me on the eve of Sunday !
The way to the church shall be strewn with jasmine ;
Please God they will come to me at the feast of the Khamseen !

8. "You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state and I in another.
"You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state, and I all alone in another."

9. You were well ; what has happened then ?
Did it come on in the evening, or when was it ?
When they told me he was ill, I went in to see him.
The man who was so alive is lying senseless.

10. What did you do in the hour when your soul departed ?
"I drank gall in great draughts of bitterness."
What did you do then in the hour of your soul's departure ?
You drank gall in great draughts of bitterness.

Collected in 1941 *at Matay-Bardanooha*
by E. Tewfik.

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755 776 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

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"Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife" enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

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the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's re[illegible] On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a *Shaikh* from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳih. . Tr.]

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
278 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARĪNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

But in 773

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, and since the *Shabshaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have seen that *ḥashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khaḍra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *ḥashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

755 except in Allah! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my
754 eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who "envied" you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an "old wife" who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the "Envied" and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the "Envied" poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

789 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows:

789
• 539 Oh, fine salt! Oh, chaste substance!
Your mother is free; your father, fine!
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains!
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die!

[1] [The '*Ashūrā*' is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

789
539

Incense the mattress [*ṭurrāḥa*] that brings you rest !
Incense the spoon from the eye of Muṣṭafā's mother !

Then he says :

My incense is fine stuff from the eloquent Prophet !
My incense is such and such from Our Lady (Zainab) ![1]
My incense is bewitched from Sīdī Barka.
My incense is received from Sīdī Madbūlī.[2]
My incense is Jāwī from Sīdī 'Ashmāwī.
Sindās, oh, Sindās ! Oh, Mursī ! Oh, Abū'l-'Abbās ![3]

Then he returns to the beginning and says :

Lo the eyes of the maiden are like cutting swords ;
And the eye of the baker is hotter than fires.
Lo, the eyes of the water-carrier bring healing from Allah.
Lo, the eyes of the girl are hotter than a javelin ;
But the eyes of the lad are more protective than a coat of mail.
Lo, the eye of the carpenter is sharper than a nail.
And the eye of a woman is keener than a scythe.
The eyes of a neighbour, fascinating and fickle,
Act with complete deception, saying :
Thou, oh, my neighbour ! wast praising Allah and grateful.
So remove the accursed thing from the home of this poor woman
That leaves her mourning.
Destroy the palaces and populate the graves.
I have incensed this basket from the eye of [p. 19] the mother of Ḥanna.
I have incensed these steps from the eye of the mother of Sālim.
Incense these mice lest they take the bread and send it to neighbours ![4]

[1] [Granddaughter of Muhammad. Tr.]
[2] [Well-known local saint in Cairo. Tr.]
[3] [Saint in Alexandria. Tr.]
[4] [The interpretation of these rhymes is largely conjectural, if not sometimes impossible. The Arabic text which is unvocalized is an unsatisfactory attempt to render the Colloquial Egyptian doggerel in terms of the defective Arabic script. See plate 4. Tr.]

8: Schaefer
539

MR13 Fellahin
Upper Egypt

[For the native text of Fellahin songs, see category 116, pp. 1-148.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 513 [783] [782] [779] In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his 512 264 [272] [276] [265] [262] pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, 512 461 [539] works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. [521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire [574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the 512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn [539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is [621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted [782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

coloured language, More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (52) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (53) c F 796 527

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
536 coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many 796
strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels
behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry 541
the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered [578]
with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the
main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with
a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of
the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is
also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has
his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable simi-
larity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues [174]
of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are col-
lected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed
by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon
rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments,
gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity.
Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get
their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head [534]
the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums
and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night
watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials [625]
in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual
fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the
muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province [635]
or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the pro-
cession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of
Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular
troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led
by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under
the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have
been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their
rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before
every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns [535]
and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh [533]
are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more
musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispens-
able even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to
have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash [783] themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

753 796 [776]

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

● 541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when [171]
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 162
women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is ob- 585
vious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the 581
women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her 164
husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, 562
and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own 836
affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition re- 521
quires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They [833]
tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life 581
utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They 833
revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less 837
by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately 548
to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means. 562

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah 562
woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has 581
borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children 185
above everything else. To the wife they mean social pres- 593
tige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of 163
polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her 593
wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A 562
fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [848] [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery committed by a woman was punished with drowning down to a [684] short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral. 593 [594] [764]

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal. [195] [264]

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure. [562] [591]

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.' 606

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1] 593 551 195

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest, 782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–50.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incen- [626] tives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

861 Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to [55] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten [857] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

857 Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before [866] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64-6.

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17.

×539 821 "Rain, pour it out", that is, all the water which you can give, so that all the vessels in the house will overflow, even to the coffee-cups. Both personal names ('Abdulle and 'Abd-el-'âl) are taken, of course, only to rhyme with the names of the vessels. It is certainly mere accident, that the name 'Abdalla appears also in a similar rain-song of Dalman's (P. 175; from Aleppo).

[551]

Ya naṭaret 'Abdulle,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-'ulle.
Ya naṭaret 'Abd-el-'âl,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-fingāl.

O Rain of 'Abdulle,
Pour it out and fill the water-bottle!
O Rain of 'Abd-el-'āl,
Pour it out and fill the cup.

2. 'ulle are the water-bottles, of porous, unglazed clay, in which the drinking-water is kept fresh. [415]

4. Fingāl (fingān) are the little coffee-cups without handles, which are placed in little stands (zarf) resembling egg-cups.

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55.

Arrogance.

×539 578 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ṛuzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Moḥammed 'Ali exterminated. For Maḥmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

[114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebî' er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ṛuzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

●[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ṛuzz (Mamaluke).

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59.

×539

Good Reason for Pride!

Dīnâre libiset mandīl
u-mkallafâ sittīn.
Ya 'āši', ya meskīn,
ṭarraḥūk 'al-ḫašab!

Dināre has put on a head-kerchief,
Which has cost her all of sixty (faḍḍa).
Now, poor lover,
Have thyself buried!

● [551] 1. Dināre is a girl's name.

4. Literally: Mayest thou be stretched upon the wood (the bier). The girl is so proud of her cheap finery. Sixty (faḍḍa) are about one and a half piastres, equalling seven and a half cents.

[435]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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63.

Good Wishes.

×539 858 A little girl is addressed, who, according to Maḥmûd, is still so small, that she is compared with "goslings which are still green (aḫḍar)". Compare No. 64. Fortune shall so favor the little one, that she shall some day eat with a golden spoon from a silver dish.

Alla ye'ēnik, ya uzēzet Ragab;
wiṭ-ṭištê faḍḍa, wil-ma'ali' dahab.

Allah help thee, O Ragab's gosling!
[415] May thy dish be of silver, the spoons of gold!

● [551] 1. According to Maḥmûd, Ragab is the name of the child's father.

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69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

539x
861

Bil-amān, ya-lummĕ,
wa-la tuḍrub aiye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana-smi Lēle?
5 *Rumman ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭaraḥ eg-genēne.
Ana ma'ak 'and el-'aḍi
fi-hāza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe, [826]
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun. [192] [551]

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'āḍi (Qâdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage. [693]

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To the End of the World!

99.

×539 Shamme is a girl's name.

● [551]

Ya Šamme, ḥāli, ya Šamme,
ya-msauwaḥāni, ya Šamme,
ya-mgauwi'āni, ya Šamme,
ya-m'aṭṭašāni, ya Šamme,
5 *ḥāli, ya Šamme!*
Larāḥ eš-šām 'ala šān Šamme!

O Shamme, what has become of me, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest restlessly wander about, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest hunger, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest thirst, Shamme,
5 What has become of me, Shamme!
Verily, I would go to Syria for the sake of Shamme!

[804] 6. I would go to the end of the world for her sake! Syria is often used for a long distance. Compare No. 100.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth 846 852 into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his 553 mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only 551 personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This [178] custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among [582] themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with 846 the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured 852 over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is [801] a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and [783] mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or 527 a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and [524] other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a [779]

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
  except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
  and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
  and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [783] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [776]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [780] [755] [782]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest, 782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–50.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she 846
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [176]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's [80]
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [183]
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 43
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding 858
his mother's or father's old wrappings.

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 842
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of [581]
the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [847]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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553 851 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and [554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

846 It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat. During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing [853] it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for 852 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

846 The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776 into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753 chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262 fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789 gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dowik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subâ'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[787 barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776 The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431 the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262 they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431 and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553 is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
302 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
247 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

[463]
[291]
[285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

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852

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the
[856] feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553 ●
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [072] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 264.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F C 553 852

forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

F C [1008]

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

F C [965]

In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

F C 307 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 844

give birth, with either foot planted on a brick.[1] From these two bricks was developed a structure resembling in outline the modern confinement chair (p. 63), but, so Professor Spiegelberg supposes, made of brick. A confinement chair of this kind was already in use in the Old Kingdom (2900–2475 B.C.).[2] It would be interesting to know at what date the wooden confinement chair replaced the brick structure. It may have done so at quite an early period, and "the brick," which is the designation of the bearing-stool even in a Nineteenth-Dynasty text, may be simply an archaism.

The midwife or female attendant in ancient times cut the umbilical cord[3] as she does to-day (p. 63). But unfortunately it is no longer the custom to wash the child immediately after birth.[4] This performance is now put off till the seventh day after that, and even then the child is only partly washed (p. 76).

A [793]

Importance was evidently attached to the placenta (see pp. 63 ff.) in ancient times; there seems to have been a priest of the royal placenta.[4] The umbilical cord seems also to have been preserved as it is to-day (pp. 64, 79), for in the Myth of Horus we are told how that god set out to obtain the umbilical cord of his father Osiris, which had fallen into the hands of Sēth, Osiris' murderer, and how, having won it from Sēth, Horus buried it in the place sacred to Osiris in Herakleopolis Magna.[5]

A [773]
F A 844 553 846

It is to be observed that the sieve played a part in ancient as in modern birth ceremonies (pp. 63, 79), for Anubis is shown trundling one in the scene in the temple of Ḥatshepsut at Deir el-Baḥri which represents the gods determining the duration of the new-born royal infant's life.[6] This determining of the duration of the royal child's life may be compared, perhaps, with the modern naming ceremony on the seventh day after birth (pp. 78 ff.). In ancient Egypt, however, a child's name seems to have been given it at birth,[7] and, anyhow in the case of a princely family, to have been also registered.[8] On the other hand, it is to be noted that

A [113]

[1] W. Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologisches Randglossar zum Alten Testament* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 19 ff.
[2] As can be seen from the determinative of the word in K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, § 1180.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[4] A. Erman, *ibid.*
[5] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, pp. 243 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[7] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 168 ff.
[8] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[9] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), p. 19.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 844 553 846 [983] A F 775 A [776] A F 774 776

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

A [852] [532]

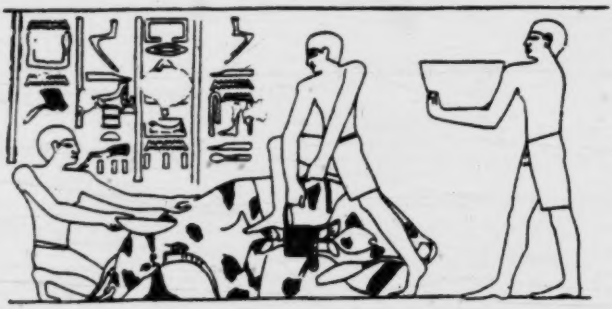

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

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In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

A [113]

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings—legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312] 241

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
● 554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

Boys	*Girls*
FROM THREE TO SEVEN	
No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers ietching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being less embarrassed, less inquisitive, [312] and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.	Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.
In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.	Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.
Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.	Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.
Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.	Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.
On the whole for him this is a [868] stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.	Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [594] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [961]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertilizer he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their [119] nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger [554] is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate [111] villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money [464] to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

476 Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

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182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations
692 between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one
[154] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined. By saying 'God compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 165.

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reciter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village
682 in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station,
[625] with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main
642 complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[430] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.
[261] [2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

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Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions. 178 574 [431] [556]

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies. 178 554

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'. 178 369

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business. 178 [626]

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1] 369 [828]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 182 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554 and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562 sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844] ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431] those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the [851] father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one, or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [980] 'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of 'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her marriage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584] marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma. Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562 arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593 is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583] when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children
851 after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains
846 in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat. During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing
[853] it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for
850 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of
846 special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64-6.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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drawing. In towns where there are kindergartens, children who completed the three years of the kindergarten are admitted without any examination. While the elementary school has always been free, the primary school only became free since 1943. The enthusiasm for the primary school in contrast to the blind alley of the elementary school, is that it leads to secondary schools and higher education. 872

In 1948 an Education Act was passed for the unification of the elementary and primary school to provide a common school for all. The ideal implied in the Act is to bring the curriculum and equipment of the elementary school up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the latter, while the former would give more instruction in Arabic and religion. Both schools would thus lead to secondary education.

The purpose of the modern system of education, primary, secondary and higher education, as envisaged by Muhammad Ali during the first half of the nineteenth century, was to train civil servants. The national policy of education, and consequently the people themselves, has connected this type of education with government service. From that point of view, the more children who attended the school the better, thereby providing wider scope of selection of employees for the government administration. The more children went to such schools, the less they received in return. As supply overtook demand, competition forced up the requirements for government jobs and lowered the economic value of certificates and degrees. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, a primary school certificate was sufficient qualification for a government job; later candidates for the same job were obliged to produce a secondary school certificate, and later even university graduates failed to find remunerative work. 871

In spite of all this, the appeal of such schools and institutions leading, not to the 'white collar' jobs in general as in the West, but particularly to government posts, cannot be exaggerated. Mann's observation in this respect still holds: 'In no other country in the world perhaps do the professional classes and especially the civil servants enjoy such widespread prestige and admiration. Hence inevitably the enthusiasm of Egyptian parents flows irresistibly into the channels of superior education, secondary or higher. The result is that there is a continual over-pressure on the accommodation of primary and secondary schools and the higher colleges, and public opinion persistently demands a further expansion of facilities at a time when the gravest doubts have arisen in the minds of the competent authorities whether a supply of professionally trained men is not being annually produced far larger than the country can ever hope to absorb.'[1] [554]

This research had been conducted before the establishment of the primary school in Silwa, and thus may serve as a base line for the effect of such an education on the village life. From information received, the 872

[1] F. O. Mann, 'Education in Egypt', *Year Book of Education*, 1952, p. 991.

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both in mentality as well as in appearance. His wide connections with other families, his geniality and warmth, win him a great deal of respect and prestige. He is also called upon to participate in Arab councils and the writer heard him once telling off another person by saying, 'You have never come out from your place near the house oven, while it is for me to take a part in the conversation in a big gathering'. His qualities for leadership make him the sort of person whose co-operation would be necessary for any plan of social reform. Unlike many other people in the village, his prestige is not based on ownership of a large-sized farm, or piety, but he compensates for that through his personality as well as his brothers' solidarity.

Mahmoud used not to say his prayers in the mosque or anywhere else for a very long time, but lately he has observed them quite regularly and thus, at last, in his own words, 'God has shown me the right way'. I was told by one of his half-brothers that Mahmoud began to be regular in saying his prayers after the successive deaths of his two grand-daughters from his sole surviving daughter. One of his main grudges in life is that he has no son, nor are there any grown-up sons in the whole of the family. It is only two years ago that his cousin had a boy whom Mahmoud pampers and carries about whenever he is free.

Mahmoud is humorously known in the village as the best eater, especially when he was younger. He told me (and I heard it from others) that he challenged some people once to eat fifteen small 'kurs' (a loaf of wheat bread six inches in diameter and half an inch in thickness) with a 'ghamoos' (vegetable), and he succeeded in doing so. He is also reputed to be skilled in slaughtering lambs and goats, and in distributing meat on ceremonial occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 577 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [559] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 12

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later. 121 301

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment. 183 301 152

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a 301 581 554 [454] 304 301 301

[Text continues on p. 49]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [182] 301

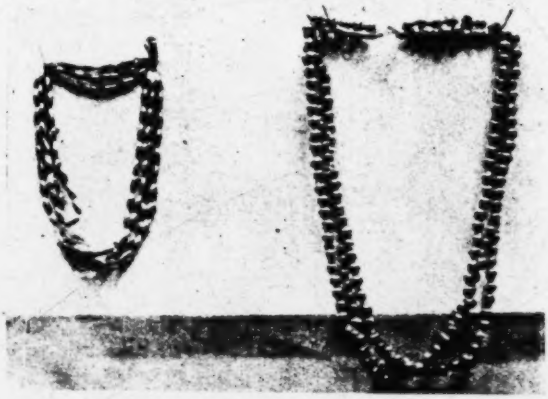

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 [789] [187]

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [42] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

∞ Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

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FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat 302
painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony [278]
(Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, [415]
called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure [755]
for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent 784
nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use 853
scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule 302
the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom 753
I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit 291
that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses 515
which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, [754]
dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach 291
almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a [462]
long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh 291
Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several 301
gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 554

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real

terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrân* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "*If this is your work I will kill you*," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and [182] when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of [465] the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A [189] good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a con- [554] siderable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Koran entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

similar erections on their backs, follow, bearing other female relatives and friends, many of the women uttering their *zaghārīṭ* as they proceed. I am told that a bride is thus conveyed on a camel if her husband lives in another village, but that she rides a horse if he lives in the same village as her parents. I have myself, however, never seen a bride on horseback.

Now that Ford cars are so common in Egypt even the *fellāḥīn* sometimes use them for conveying the bride and her friends to the bridegroom's house, the wedding procession thereby losing a great deal of its old picturesqueness. Cartloads of furniture are carried from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, usually on the day before she goes there herself. Everything is left uncovered while it is being conveyed to the house, so that people may see what good furniture the bride is taking with her!

Music plays an important part in all the marriage festivities, and the bridal procession often includes a band. The groom gives a feast in his house to all his male friends, the bride remaining in a room at the top of the house with her female relatives and companions. The women dance a peculiar dance on these occasions, usually known to Europeans as the *danse à ventre*. It is exceedingly ugly, and must require a special development of abdominal muscles. A woman or girl who performs in this way first ties a sash tightly round her waist, then, holding out a stick in front of her in both hands, she jerks her stomach up and down, turning round and round as she does so. As I have said before,[1] the bride's friends present her with small sums of money, placing these gifts on her upturned face. As evening advances guns are fired, the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*, and the musicians likewise contribute to the general din. An awning is usually erected outside the house, and here the men congregate, congratulating the bridegroom and drinking coffee and smoking. The festivities are usually kept up for two or three days unless the people are very poor.

Among the Copts the preliminary arrangements are much the same as among the Muslims, but with them there is, of course, a marriage service in the church. Among the *fellāḥīn* the bride is brought to church on a camel if she and her bridegroom live in different villages, but on a horse if their homes are in the same village. The bride is followed by her female friends similarly mounted. I am told that the service takes place in the evening,

[1] See p. 87.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn. 283 962

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and 252 962

[286] [299] [291] [19a]

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants. [554] [26a]

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

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FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be

[554]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

791 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician
554 is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and
[431] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the
[754] peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

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FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

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755 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain
756 in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 627 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 798 766 941 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 795 762 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

FA 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

FA 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

FA 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

FA 849

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

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[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

427 511 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken from us, we will steal." ([illegible])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 554 183 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 651 452 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 427 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([illegible]).

423 432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Copts MR10

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken
186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author
[702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants,
123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate
186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation
579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered
186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried
682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the
609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the
579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the
577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwil*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13, EGYPT MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿeliwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥeliwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

38.

×539
466

El-ʿafu, ya bē, yafendina,
win kunna ʿibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraḍḍīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [570] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, [593] the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. a. Another said: rabbīna, raḍḍīna.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [465]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-ward ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʾāš ʿalē dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukāb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled here!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 1 and No. 7, l. 2.

3. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Another Contrast.

539x
574
554

104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gani abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
5 *wazemzem-lo-l-fingāl*
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
5 And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

×539
●554
574

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behāim
5 *we-šīl waḥlāt iš-šite!*

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
5 And cart off the winter's dung!"

[291] 1. The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).
2. So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.
3. Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

116.

Christian and Moslem.

539x 558

A Mohammedan woman has thrown herself away on a Coptic goldsmith. The word nuṣrāni, Christian, always has an odious sound to the Moslem; for this reason the woman thinks she has claim to valuable gifts from her lover. [186]

Ramāni-l-ṛarām, ramāni
taḥtē šibbāk en-nuṣrāni.
Ma 'ultē-lak, ya-m'allim Mūse?
Du" lil-kirdān 'arūse!
5 *Muslime we-'aši'et nuṣrāni!*

Love has smitten me, smitten me
Under the Christian's window.
Did I not tell thee, Master Mūsa?
"Fasten a pendant to my necklace!"
5 I, a Moslem, in love with a Christian!

3. Have I not had to ask you once before for the ornament? Me'allim, master, literally: teacher, is a title given to all Copts, with the exception of the poorest classes. [554]

4. 'arūse is an ornament, which hangs zē nīšān = like an order, on the necklace. [301]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an additional wife because his first one has not presented him with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility. And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change of wives, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time. This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuccessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The father must always maintain the children that any divorced wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore, forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this and other reasons it is very common among the higher classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to these matters, since the state does not concern itself about matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesiastical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some weak attempts

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1]

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible.

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3]

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertiliser he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him.

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, 178
and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be 574
spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also [431]
reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which
Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of [559]
clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of 178
some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran- 554
carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town 178
show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although 369
the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social 178
structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of [626]
learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their 369
life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such [828]
expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures 182
of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

423 425 426 Small properties do not result solely from the subdivision of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 425 426 556 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

656 [312] The Government, by its control of the land, and still more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

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one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, when hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son. 641 174

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1] 641 [944] 655 641 [558] [919] [453] [956] [926]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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116.

Christian and Moslem.

539x
558

A Mohammedan woman has thrown herself away on a Coptic goldsmith. The word nuṣrāni, Christian, always has an odious sound to the Moslem; for this reason the woman thinks she has claim to valuable gifts from her lover. [186]

Ramāni-l-ṛarām, ramāni
taḥtê šibbāk en-nuṣrāni.
Ma 'ultê-lak, ya-m'allim Mūse?
Du" lil-kirdān 'arūse!
5 *Muslime we-'ašī'et nuṣrāni!*

Love has smitten me, smitten me
Under the Christian's window.
Did I not tell thee, Master Mūsa?
"Fasten a pendant to my necklace!"
5 I, a Moslem, in love with a Christian!

3. Have I not had to ask you once before for the ornament? Me'allim, master, literally: teacher, is a title given to all Copts, with the exception of the poorest classes. [554]

4. 'arūse is an ornament, which hangs zē nišān = like an order, on the necklace. [301]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *ala Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
527

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution. [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
607 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
[779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 857 573

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognizes that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people.

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomized in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God.

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3]

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the suppressed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347.

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located.

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

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become a great asset in house tasks; for instance, as 'fuel fetchers'. Most of the fuel in the form of maize straw, tree branches and manure is stacked on the roof, and boys are expected to help their mothers in bringing down the fuel stores into the house whenever needed.

The third feature that emerges from the children's play in the village is the social significance of age. As mentioned in the description of games, the leaders are invariably chosen on an age-basis. In any game, the older boys are the senior boys, unless joined later by boys who are older still and who are entitled to take over the role of leadership. Age, as the basis of seniority, is recognised by children even at the age of five and six, where the selection of the leaders amongst this age level occasions most of the quarrels which occur. In case of disagreement as to who is the oldest boy, this is sometimes decided by height. If this brings further disagreement, the problem is referred to an older boy, who is expected to know their relative ages. Furthermore, if any boy goes complaining to his mother on any account when playing, the first question she asks him is whether the child who hit him is older than he. If so she stands by her child, otherwise she straight away tells him, 'He is your age. Go and hit him, you coward.' The shaming would be worse if the offender happens to be younger.

It is also worth repeating that the two teams playing are usually balanced by the pairing up of 'equals' (nadid) which actually means 'of the same age' in the children's language. Failing to achieve that, two young boys may be given two or even three turns, if the other team has an older boy to match them. Players are usually reminded by the leaders of how well their opposite number is playing on the other side. Throughout organized or unorganized games, children are always encouraged to face the clash of 'equals' as an important experience in life.

Another important social norm reflected in play procedures is the respect that is shown to the leaders in directing the games, and the power enjoyed by them. They settle the disputes and smooth misunderstandings that occur during the game. They have to stand up to the inevitable latecomer who threatens to break up the game if not admitted. In this respect, it is also worth pointing out that they are seldom involved in the penalties that result from losing. For instance, in most of the games described they do not take part in the humiliating 'donkey-ride' which applies only to their team.

The last feature in our sociological analysis is the place for play. For children of all ages play always takes place outside the dwelling house. When a child starts playing in the house, the normal reaction on the part of the mother, father or any older member of the family is to expel him from the house, as if play, by its nature, should be indulged in beyond the dwelling premises. While such a reaction may be attributed in some measure to the fact that children might break things or create undue disturbance, the substantial reason is that the house is a place for work, and for the carrying out of serious domestic, social, and economic tasks. The notion

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

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153 as instruments of differential qualitative analysis. Nadel expressed the view that intelligence tests 'in their specific adjustment to cultural groups would already reflect specific qualitative factors of culture, and culturally determined forms of intelligence'. Such an approach would not be so much concerned with assessing degrees of intelligence, as 'analysing types and qualities of intelligence'.[1] The concrete, matter-of-fact orientation of children's intelligence in Silwa did not only exhibit itself in the relatively better performance in the Pass-along test, but was also revealed in the ease in which their attention was engaged in the performance tests compared with the verbal one. Moreover, in the case of performance tests some boys and girls after getting stuck at some point in the testing asked me whether they could bring an older boy or girl who could help them or who could 'solve it better for me'. This attitude seems to be a reflection of the cultural pattern in which an older person is supposed to know better and hence should be consulted.

[561]

It has become increasingly evident that experience in different cultures and even different socio-economic groups in one culture, may lead to basically different perceptual responses and lend different meanings to a similar test situation. Moreover, one cannot ignore the importance of cultural motivation in assessing test results and interpreting numbers and scores.

Japanese children have been found to excel American children significantly in tests involving sustained attention, visual perception or spatial orientation, while falling behind on verbal and arithmetic tests. It is also reported that Chinese groups excelled the Japanese in the Binet type of tests and in auditory memory span, while they scored lower in the Porteus Maze and in all performance and mechanical aptitude tests.[2]

[1] S. F. Nadel, 'The Application of Intelligence Tests in the Anthropological Field', in *The Study of Society*, p. 197.

[2] Anastasi and Foley, op. cit., pp. 739–40. For the effect of cultural values on intelligence and other psychological tests, see Klineberg, op. cit. See also M. Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, where she mentions that the aesthetic interest of children in Samoa overshadowed the task of solving the test problems.

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512 almost deserted, except for women going on visits or on business and young children noisily engaged in their games. By sunset the roads leading to the village become busy and crowded with villagers and cattle returning home, who in their hurried endeavour to get their evening meal raise the dense cloud of dust that characterizes the agricultural roads and the village streets during this hour. Some time later, the village witnesses the general exodus of women and girls from the village towards the Nile to fill their water jars, while the men sprawl outside the houses or cluster round a wood-fire in the guest house on cold nights to exchange news, smoke their tobacco and engage in gossip.

369 121 101 In portraying some of the features of the rustic setting and life in Silwa, a question emerges: to what extent is this village under study typical of the rural conditions in Egypt? To such a question an objective answer is almost impossible, considering the fact that there are five thousand large villages and twenty thousand hamlets (izbahs) in Egypt. The writer can only claim with confidence that Silwa is typical of the majority of villages in the province of Aswan. There are certainly differences from one province to another, with regard to the degree of urbanization, the infiltration of agencies of social change such as schools, means of communication, newspapers and radio. On the whole, Aswan, being the farthest province from the metropolis, could be considered relatively the least affected by such factors. It is also known as one of the poorest provinces, as the Nile Valley reaches its narrowest stretch in the south (with the exception of the district of Kom Ombo). Moreover, Silwa, as will be seen later, is composed mainly of small landowners. There are many other villages throughout Egypt where the inhabitants are mainly tenants or part-owners and part-tenants, while many others work as hired labour.[1] With the exception of Kom Ombo, the majority of the land in Aswan produces subsistence crops, while in other provinces cash crops such as cotton and sugar-cane may be the main agricultural crop.

562 189 At this juncture it is important to point out one of the striking differences between most of the provinces of Upper Egypt down to Beni Suef and the other provinces, especially in the Delta. This is while women in the former provinces go about veiled and do not actually work on the fields, those in the latter are neither veiled nor debarred from active work on the farm. The writer cannot satisfactorily account for such a difference and knows of no source that has tackled this question. Is it merely a result of some historical or racial difference between the two parts of the country? Has it some connection with cotton culture and the perennial irrigation which are mainly predominant in the North?[2] Is it an expression of some

[1] See A. Ammar, op. cit.

[2] The cultivation of cotton requires not only a dense population, but one with a birth rate above the average. Charles Issawi, *Egypt—An Economic and Social Analysis*, London, 1947. In the light of this, female labour was perhaps essential for the economic activities in those provinces.

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major cultural variation between these regions? Or is it a combination of these factors? At present the writer finds himself unable to settle such an issue.

In conclusion, it is extremely difficult to show the extent to which Silwa is a typical Egyptian village. All that can be claimed is that Silwa at least represents one of the village types prevailing in Upper Egypt. It also reflects in its community life some of the national problems of population pressure, of agricultural economy, malnutrition, and slow rate of accepting government-sponsored programmes as evidenced by instances of resistance and evasion which will be discussed later.

If, however, no single concrete statement about Silwa applies to other villages in Upper Egypt, the writer can tentatively assume that through the diversity of details there runs a common outlook and ethos of life and that very few differences obtain with regard to the cultural values and the aims and methods of socialization.[1]

Silwa, however, was not primarily chosen for a field-work investigation for its 'typicalness' or otherwise, and the writer must admit that 'the prime mover' for this selection was his personal connection with the village. In it he was born and brought up till the age of seven, when he left to receive his primary-school education in Aswan, his secondary education in Sohaj, province of Jirja, and his university course in Cairo. Throughout his life he has never severed his contacts with his birthplace as he used to stay there during summer holidays and the short-term vacations. The writer lived in close emotional, spiritual and intellectual touch with the villagers, a position which has its merits and demerits for such a study.

The choice of such a village was also appropriate as it presents a convenient starting point for a first study of this kind, as the village is relatively isolated and homogeneous where the traditional culture is presumably better preserved than others in more contact with city life. With fewer social sub-divisions, with no complexity of social classes, of differential functions and of division of labour, and with the dominance of universals and a minimum of alternatives and specialities in social behaviour, such a community is more amenable to study for a single investigator.[2]

With no problem of learning the language or even the dialect, the six months of field work were fairly adequate to carry out such an investigation.

[1] For the substantiation or modification of such a statement, research in other Provinces has to be considered. The gap in such studies has been felt by many scholars. 'The Near and Middle East can show practically no contributions to these studies.' Margaret Read, *Education and Cultural Tradition*, London, 1951, p. 20. 'No Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times, has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country.' H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, London, 1950, p. 5.

[2] The terms 'universals, alternatives and specialities' have been introduced by R. Linton and are used here in the same way. See his book *The Study of Man*, New York, 1946, pp. 272–4. R. Firth refers to the value of concentrated observation of small-unit behaviour, a type of study for which he suggests the term micro-sociology, in *Elements of Social Organization*, London, 1951.

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small landholders. Three decades ago, the head of one family owned about thirty acres, but after his death the land was divided into smaller plots between his inheritors. At present, apart from two outside landowners who possess about sixty acres in the village, and ten other villagers who each own more than five feddans, all the rest own less than five feddans. If the total arable land, estimated at 1350 acres, were distributed among the total population of 4450 people approximately, the *per capita* share would be little less than third of an acre (seven kirats) or 0·58 crop area *per capita*, which is slightly higher than the crop area *per capita* for the whole country, i.e. 0·46.[1] Moreover, the soil of the cultivable land in the village represents the average soil in the country, judging by its taxable power, which ranges from eighty to a hundred piastres.

At this juncture, it is relevant to mention that according to the Koranic law, at the death of man or woman, his or her property is shared by all the children of the deceased. We cannot go into the various details of the intricate Moslem law of inheritance, but shall refer to some of its significant principles. A female gets a share half that of the male. The inheritance should always be awarded to the 'asaba, the patrilineal line, however distant its members may be (apart from the wife, if she lives after her husband). The law recognizes the equivalence of siblings of the same sex, and it gives no privileges to primogeniture.

During the father's life, his children, whatever their age or status, have no legal right to own any of his property.[2] Whether to divide the land each attending to his share independently, or to keep it intact and farm it co-operatively, depends on the relationship between the heirs.[3] Many factors are involved, such as the existence of half-siblings (brothers or sisters by the father only), where the possibility of division is very great, on the relations of wives and in-laws, on the father's treatment of his children while alive, and so forth. If the land as the symbol of family unity is tilled co-operatively, the married sisters then get their land produce

[1] The 'crop area' unit is used instead of the acre because of the existence of the two systems of irrigation in various parts of the country, and hence the crop area gives a more accurate estimate of the cultivable land. For the whole country it is calculated that the land yields an average of a crop and a half per acre. For the whole country the population is 19,090,000, the cultivated area per acres, 5,585,300, and crop area 8,815,900 (Census 1947).

[2] See S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*, London, 1931.

[3] The fear of division and perhaps the forgetting of one's name in the family has led some of the landowners to consecrate land, for all the members of his family of the patrilineal descent, which could not be owned separately, and should pass, as left, intact to the second generation and the third and so on. This type of land is called 'Wakf Ahli—family endowment', to differentiate it from Wakf Khairi—charitable endowment, consecrated for religious purposes and looked after by the Ministry of Charitable Endowments. The abuses in running these estates led the new regime that followed the abdication of ex-King Farouk to pass a law dissolving the charitable endowments (September 1952). According to this law these estates are to be distributed among the legal heirs as specified by the Islamic law of inheritance.

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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
[779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[291] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the house' while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover, while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

858 My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
779 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

842 My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554
and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562
sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844]
ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431]
those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the
father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851]
wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one,
or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased
by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy
even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than
seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [782]
'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most
effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no
brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of
'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar-
riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584]
marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful
rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as
well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma.
Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are
taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is
brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and
this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562
arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593
is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is
always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the
one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they
get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My
informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an
occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her
father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers
are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by
sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father
as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583]
when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of
gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the
father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides
a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the
song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her
parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence
her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

562 842 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls. One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 843 431 602 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immediately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and 846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure 431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or 602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was [578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

602 Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him- 844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [847]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

872 294 [562] learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

[M8] After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing 219 fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with [386] some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

use 8.

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of schoolchildren during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [250] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are un- [744] methodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

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Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

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562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

586 A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
428 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
581 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment ; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

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152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

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believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 577 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 10

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832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [580] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is 584 prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the 585 daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 492 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 162
women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is ob- 585
vious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the 581
women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her 164
husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, 563
and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own 836
affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition re- 521
quires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They [833]
tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life 581
utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They 833
revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less 837
by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately 548
to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means. 562

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah 562
woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has 581
borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children 185
above everything else. To the wife they mean social pres- 593
tige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of 163
polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her 593
wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A 562
fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [601]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqîh* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (**)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how
562 to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[823] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
181 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his credi-
565 tor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'îd is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrizi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
163 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [353] cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352] that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [771] the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [561] for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755 makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776 her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. 756 So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or Shaikh *Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

153 But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
152 cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared
861 especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers [562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

157 "AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they 'prescribed' incensing,
Which an "old wife" among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation?
And does their 'incensing' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton?"

Some of the "old wives" in the provinces were famed in past ages for their "cure" of venereal disease by "incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An "old wife" came to "incense" a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from [164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the "incensing" of the "doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkha*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

600

Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

512 [574] [461] [204] 484 [788] [186] [521]

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

512 562

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

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512 groan and languish under the burden of their daily labours,
562 yet they do not, as the common descriptions of harem life lead us to believe, recline the live-long day on the soft divan enjoying the *dolce far niente*, adorned with gold and jewels, smoking, and supporting upon the yielding pillow those arms that indolence makes so plump, while the eunuchs and female slaves stand before them watching their every sign, and anxious to spare them the slightest movement. Such slothful dames may indeed be found here and there in the harems of the great, but are not confined to this country. People fall again and again into the mistake of comparing the life of the women of our middle ranks with that of those that occupy the harems of the great! The care of house and family lies much more heavily upon the women here, and there is enough to attend to even if, being assisted by female slaves, as is the case in the higher ranks, they have not to put to their hands themselves, and confine themselves only to giving orders. Cooking, baking, sewing, embroidering, washing, and scouring must be carried on, and children must be attended to here as well as elsewhere—there is no reading nor pianoforte playing, however.

[513] Before sunrise women and children are already awake and moving, many indeed under cover of the dark gray dawn pro-
515 ceed to the river to bathe and wash themselves. The toilette, however, is not usually the first thing that demands attention;
[512] the kitchen must first be attended to in order to let the husband away to his occupation. A complete toilette including combing and plaiting of the hair is not in many cases indulged in every day even among ladies of the better class. In this way time and trouble are spared, but a certain class of vermin are left almost unmolested, and establish themselves often so firmly among the black locks of the Eastern beauties that they cannot be extirpated notwithstanding the raids that are made upon them from time to time—even with the application of gray mercurial ointment. As a rule the toilette is associated with a bath, to which praiseworthy enjoyment high and
[368] low are attached, whether it be taken in the public bathing establishment, in the river, the sea, or at home by means of

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments. 515 [368]

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike. 574 562 517 [276] [277] [533] [535] [351] 562 [182] [171]

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband 512 [264] [513] [562]

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562 [512] again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are [834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *hurme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im- [554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that [834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded [171] name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, [184] whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its [554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed, [195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the [834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common [264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his [783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essak Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[202] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street.
[735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [943]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analyst]

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764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house"
[825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give
● [562] themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians,
[171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor
[693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

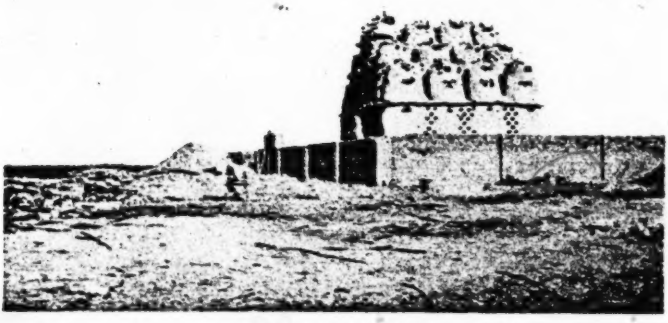

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii, 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

[291]
[413]
[139]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into 303 563

[137] [091] [142] [815]

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It [413]

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

303
415
516
291
563

FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

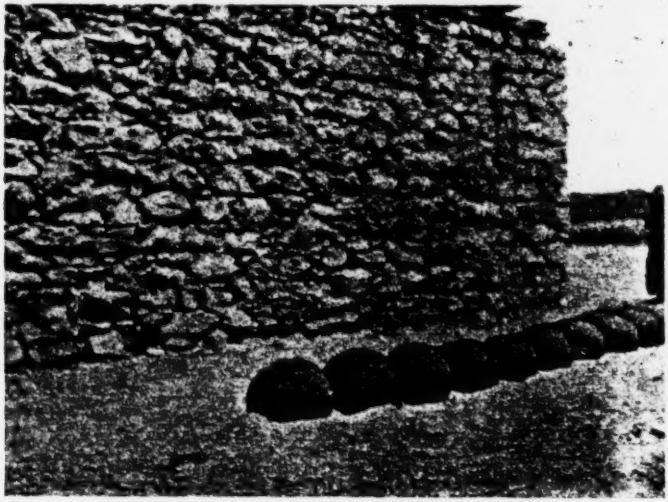
[page 144]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 184



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the separate circle of the Princes.

E 563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([11]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

421 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply ([41]).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.
647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424]
lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 113 See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library.

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic RIF with the French RIVE.

F [527 171] 64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443 186] 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are 854
his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, 755
and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, 753
before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. 164
Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heavi- 753
ness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The 757
"operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. [164]
Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the 563
Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and 759

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]
[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabtbī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

F 563 759

counsels. And they are not to be deceived by the fact that certain men of science in Europe have recently arisen in support of the methods of "curing" possessed by the Ghagar and by the "old wives." It will not be long before they reverse their opinion.

XXXV

THE FARGĀN (TRIBE) AND HYDROPHOBIA (KALAB)

L 831 169

It is well-known that the Bedouin and Arabs who dwell in the deserts and wildernesses, are harmed by their employing dogs as protectors and friends, and making them serve as guardians and watchers over their lives and possessions. Because of the wide-spread use of these animals amongst them, the chances of being bitten by them have increased. They "cure" such by means of cauterization with a heated iron, whether the person be afflicted with real hydrophobia or not, as is often the case.

L 759 759

It is firmly rooted in popular belief to-day that there is no escape from the evil consequences of a bite except "treatment" by this method at the hand of the *Fargān*, a small group of the Aulād 'Alī tribe,[1] who call themselves Marabouts (*murābiṭīn*). You see those who are bitten by dogs going repeatedly unto them, and seeking them out from all parts of the country and the farthest horizons, to obtain healing and relief from the distress of the disease. As for the above-mentioned "method," it consists of heating a piece of iron in the fire until it reaches the stage of being red-hot. Then the *Fargān* take it and severely burn the wound with it. And one of the observations which the patient must follow is to remain in a darkened room for the space of fifty days, during which he must not approach his wife. Otherwise the benefit [p. 71] expected from the "treatment" ceases.

[1] [Desert Arabs. See P. Kahle: *Die Aulad-'Ali-Bedouinen der Libyschen Wüste*, in *Der Islam*, IV (1913), pp. 355–386. Tr.]

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various 754
tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see 152
him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men 828
just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their 754
village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies [563]
(*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was [437]
worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found [241]
him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs". 539 563 186 [221] [231]

Ma 'ultē-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until lat-. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems. [812]

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs
● 563 who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are
[576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir mālya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šāwirtē ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintē šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] [312] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

FA 342 565

The poorer classes lived in tumbledown dwellings similar to those in which they live at the present time, as can be seen from the clay models of such houses dating from the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.).[1] Houses exactly like those of the respectable but not well-to-do *fellāḥīn* have recently been found at el-ʿAmarneh.[2]

The portico, so marked a feature of the better type of modern

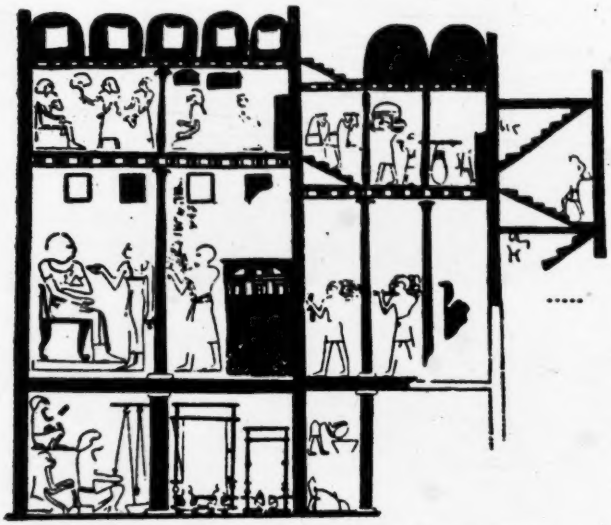


FIG. 154. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TWO-STORIED HOUSE
After A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 3.

house (*cf.* p. 228, Fig. 134), especially the country house or house enclosed in a garden, was no less a feature of the ancient mansions also, as can be seen from numerous representations of such belonging to different periods.[3]

FA 352

The *maṣṭabeh* outside the house-door (p. 32) was probably no less frequent in an ancient than it is in a modern Egyptian town

A [113]

[1] H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients* (Berlin, 1925), p. 267; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 2.

[2] T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 ff.; see also W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 48*b*, 4.

[3] See, for example, J. Capart, *L'art égyptien*, vol. i, "L'architecture" (Brussels, 1922), Pl. 110; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 207; H. E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1918–1920," Part II of *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, December, 1920, pp. 24 f.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

INTRODUCTION

ON UNDERSTANDING THE FELLAH

A country's peasantry is like the small particles in a sentence, or the strips of leading in a stained-glass window. It binds the nation together, gives it stability and character. It provides that humble but indispensable support on which both economic and social systems rely. By producing more than it consumes, the peasantry maintains society in health, and ensures a sound regularity to the state finances. 182

But the peasantry as a class is composed of separate individuals, of men. Enslaved as they may be to soil and seasons, long-suffering and slow, hide-bound and unprogressive as they appear to us, it is these people above all others who deserve the name of men. 565 182

Too long have we confused the producer with his product and the worker with the fruits of his labour. We have taken our fill of the harvest without a thought for the man who made it grow. We have failed to notice the distress which he himself could not put into words, and perhaps only half felt. And so today we are astonished at the reawakening of the peasantry, and realise with a shock of surprise what a dead weight of ignorance has been allowed to accumulate, both in official circles and in society at large, about the man of the soil. 114

By developing the themes of pastoralism and of natural beauty, and so confounding the peasant with his background, poets and artists of all ages, from Virgil to the present day, have conspired to draw a veil of illusion over the realities of country life. They have given us wonderful pictures, to be sure, but in so doing they have accustomed us to see in country life nothing but its picturesque and sentimental side, to find in an image the whole reality. The "sower's

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

Chapter III

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

EGYPT AN OLIGARCHY

In Egyptian politics and society the peasantry has always constituted the primal mass, and as it were the raw material; the foundation, almost the sub-soil, on which government and society are based. This double structure must now be considered before we can look more closely at the fellah's way of life.

E F 565

The façade of contemporary Egypt, modern and composite in style, is represented by the country's three great cities with their striking, many-sided activity. There is Cairo, with its two universities (having nearly 20,000 students), its palaces and museums, its scientific institutions, its international congresses and winter lecture-courses. There is Alexandria, with its busy port and Cotton Exchange, its foreign institutions, its fashionable beaches and esplanade. There is Port Said, gateway to the East, with the Suez Canal and all its traffic. These cities compose a sort of triptych, in which large and varied groups standing side by side conceal the fundamental Egypt, just as the stones of a mosaic hide the grey cement which supports them.

E F 369

Just as it was once usual to speak of 'All the Russias', so today, from a social point of view, one might well talk of Egypt in the plural. There is no single Egyptian people, in the usual literary or historical sense of this word, but only a seething assemblage of the most varied types, which has no real correspondence with the country itself. Neither is there a true peasant community, but only a homogeneous mass of peasants bound to the soil and isolated in their villages.

E F 101

3

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *ezba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee land lords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

the fellaheen are mere 'creatures', in which there is no point 565
in interesting oneself, and which it is considered good form 369
to know nothing about. Faced with the simplest of queries about them, the rich often show an ignorance which makes it quite clear that such questions have never occured to them, and arouse no curiosity. Even the best of them, while deploring the dullness and hidebound habits of the fellah, will do nothing to help him that might lessen their own income. All this maintains the gulf between the two extremes.

There is, however, a country middle class, consisting of 565
medium landowners. Like the smallholders, they are closely 423
attached to the village. Conservative, gain-loving and un- 181
pretentious, they live in the country and keep a close watch on the yield of their feddans. At feasts and funerals they give generously to their poor neighbours. From this class are drawn the pupils who fill the primary and secondary schools in the provinces, the students of the religious institutes dependent on Al-Azhar, the Government employees, and a number of police officers. It has produced the great men of contemporary Egypt, such as Sheikh Mohammed Abdou, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, Nahas Pasha, and Dr Taha Hussein.

These patriarchal families are, however, becoming fewer 556
and fewer. One reason is the growth of their wealth and 565
ambition. The second generation makes its way into the 166
higher levels, and settles in Cairo or Alexandria. This exodus from the fields was largely encouraged by the boom of 1919-20, but apart from this the westernised education of the young and the taste for European things have produced a distaste for country life. Cairo and Alexandria, during the last fifteen years, have developed considerably in size and in amenities. Every year there is a new influx of wealthy provincials from the chief towns and villages in all the mudiriyas. Villas and blocks of flats spring up everywhere and luxury shops do a thriving trade.

A second reason for the decay of this middle class 565
is the splitting up of estates by inheritance, for families 428
are large. According to Moslem Law, which is univer- 423
sally applicable, the sons receive two parts each to the daughter's one. It is by no means unusual to find the grandson of a man who had 40 feddans inheriting no more than one, so that he falls back to the level of the fellaheen.

181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *mudwen* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [19].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

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183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (")".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah
562 practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[823] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
181 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his credi-
565 tor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Egypt MR1

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah, but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (**). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 748 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Invitations.

113.

The girl makes pretense of showing her lover one of the sand-banks which emerge from the Nile, suffer many changes and disappear, according to the season of the year. Here, of course, it is only a cloak (Maḥmûd). 539x 932 [133]

Ya tara, ya ḥabîbi,
kuntê fên el-yôm?
ša'rak mesabsab,
we-'ênak sable lin-nôm.
5 *Iṭla' bina 'aṣr 'ali,*
ninâm we-nišba' nôm.
wafarragak 'ala-l-gezîre,
illi-tnašet el-yôm.

Where, my beloved,
Hast thou been today?
Thy hair hangs on thy brow
And thine eye is heavy with sleep.
5 Let us mount a lofty house
And sleep till we are sated with sleep.
And I will show thee the island
Which has formed itself today.

3. Literally: hangs straight down.

5. 'aṣr, literally: castle, designates a solidly built structure with an upper story. Even a house such as the middle class in the cities possess, is, in the country beside the miserable peasant-huts, designated as 'aṣr, "castle" (Vollers). [342] [565]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Middle, and New Kingdoms. What really is beginning to affect the racial purity of the Egyptians is the presence among them of the descendants of negro slaves, who have been imported in large numbers by the Arabs in comparatively recent times. Many of them are now settled in certain of the villages, where they have

FIG. 1. MAP OF EGYPT

married among themselves or with the *fellāḥīn*, the result being that the population of such villages is almost entirely composed of black, or half-black, people. So far as I have observed, this negroid element is particularly marked in the Fayūm and Beni Ṣuēf, and on the edge of the cultivation in Minia and Asyūṭ provinces, where large numbers of Arabs have been settled for several generations.

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and 595
all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not
a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an
additional wife because his first one has not presented him [842]
with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case
with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have
become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility.
And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when 586
the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother
of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted
to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are
still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be
effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and
there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows
who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with
expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom
cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change
of wares, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a
fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time.
This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if [554]
he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though
it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuc-
cessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female 567
slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him
with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails
demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who
according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The 586
father must always maintain the children that any divorced
wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore,
forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this
and other reasons it is very common among the higher
classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the [595]
rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single
wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to
these matters, since the state does not concern itself about
matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesias-
tical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some [illegible]ak attempts

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the house' while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

121 community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village, and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world . Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka . To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

776 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [715] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [828] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking [828] too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

•571 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 773 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defense mechanism of rivalry and caution.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

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So far we have been chiefly concerned with analysis of tales mainly from a functional point of view, especially as data to be brought to bear on the socio-psychological problems of culture-personality. We have not exhausted the various ways of analysis of such oral traditions such as discerning a given motif, a tale type, a quality of inner experience, a sense of wonder and astonishment, and so forth.[1]

I

Once upon a time a cock witnessed the falling of the roof of a house, then the fox came along to enquire as to what happened, to which the cock replied, 'Can't you see?' Then came the wolf, who asked the fox about the matter, but the latter referred him to the cock saying that he himself did not know. Then came the tigress (daba) asking the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock. Then came the silowa, who asked the tigress, who referred her to the wolf, who referred her to the fox, who referred her to the cock.[2]

II

There were once a goat, a cock, and a donkey who tended a farm together. One morning, on going together to the farm they discovered that the crops were eaten. As the goat and the cock were staying in the same house, they suspected the donkey of secretly eating the plants, but he denied it as he alleged he was lying sick in bed the night before. As they did not believe him they asked him to join them in taking a vow whilst jumping over the well. The cock crowed 'cock-a-doodle-do' and jumped over the well. The goat bleated 'na-na' whilst successfully jumping over the well. Then came the donkey braying 'hee-haw', but while he was jumping a wolf, who had lain hidden in the well, grabbed the donkey by the leg and gobbled him up.[3]

III

Three billy-goats were attacked by a wolf. Before he started tearing them to pieces to eat them, he asked the first billy-goat, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The wolf tore him apart and devoured him. Then the wolf asked the second one, 'What are these things sticking out of your head?' To which he answered, 'They are horns'. The same fate befell him. Then the wolf asked

[1] For a comprehensive survey of the various ways of analysis of folklore see E. J. Lindgren, op. cit. For a most stimulating analysis of 'The Oedipus Myth, and the fairy tale of Red Riding Hood', see E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*, London, 1952.

[2] Reflections of fear of committing oneself can be detected in this tale, an expression of the uneasy climate of interpersonal relations in the community.

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[3] Apart from its manifest moral content, the latent content could be regarded as one with Oedipus reflections taking the donkey as the father, and the goat and cock as mother and child respectively.

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psychological factor. Professor Read has commented on scientists trained in the fields of agriculture, medicine, or economics, and brought up with great faith in anything labelled scientific, who do not easily realize that the peasant has a sense of security in his very insecurity. She further maintains 'that insecurity is the thing he knows, and he understands it in so far as he has always lived with it and adjusted his practices and his ideas in relation to it'.[1]

These remarks about some of the traditional ways of life in the village are only explanations of certain social facts and imply no value judgment. As Nadel maintains, the social enquirer at some stage in his analysis inevitably turns into a social philosopher and 'must posit absolute aims or purposes, and some self-reliant worthwhileness of actions, since without these assumptions his subject matter simply makes no sense'.[2] We believe that change there can be, and ought to be. But as we have been mainly concerned in this thesis with the analytical and explanatory and not the evaluative categories of enquiry, there is no point in dwelling on the latter here.

This study provokes also a comment concerning the generalization made about the nature of the face-to-face relations in a simple society and the value concepts attached to them. Some sociologists have maintained that, because of the integration of such societies, personal relations are smooth and intimate, and perhaps attractive, contrasted with the discontents of civilization and its disorganizing forces.[3] This seems to be another type of generalization similar to that refuted by anthropologists with regard to the groupistic and individualistic nature of behaviour amongst primitive and peasant societies.

In spite of his emphasis on the group behaviour of the Arab fellaheen, and on the importance of appealing to the whole community, Tannous also mentions incidents of rivalry, conflict, and competition among them.[4] In this study we have noted how the constituent social units of this community give rise to tendencies of conflict and rivalry. It has been shown how the susceptibility to friction in this community's culture finds in the early stimulation of sibling rivalry one of its supporting forces. Both solidarity and friction are cultural expectations among siblings, and this reflects itself in the village structure as well as in its structural relations with the rest of the G'afra villages. It seems that the equilibrium of the community is maintained through an elaborate system of social behaviour

[1] Margaret Read, 'Common Grounds in Community Development Experiments', in *Community Development Bulletin*, Vol. II, June 1951.

[2] S. F. Nadel, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[3] See Kimball Young, *Social Psychology*, in his distinction between the characteristics of primary and secondary groups. This is also evident in some of Redfield's writings. See also Lewis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*, London, 1934.

[4] Afif I. Tannous, 'Extension Work among the Arab Fellahin', in *Farmers of the World*, ed. by Edmund de S. Brunner, Irwin T. Sanders and Douglas Ensminger, New York, 1947 ed., pp. 78–100.

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571 and reciprocal obligations counterbalancing the competitive tendencies within the community.[1]

156 The vulnerability to tension and friction not only characterizes the constituent social groupings, but obtains in the realm of the interpersonal relationships. Throughout this work reference has been made to attitudes of reserve, constriction, and suspicion prevailing in personal relations. [500] Hearty laughter is rare, and it usually occurs amongst adults in their sarcastic allusions to others, and in belittling their esteem, while apparently seeming to praise them. Suspicion of the evil intentions of others is institutionalized in the evil eye, seeing potential danger in practically everybody. The small family guards its private affairs with great caution, especially its misfortunes, for fear that others may exult or gloat at their expense, or find some way of attacking their moral integrity. The almost morbid fear of shame, the excessive touchiness, the frequent resort to the use of oaths and swearing, the exaggerated expressions of language, and the scrupulous attitude towards food, are all symptoms of a type of personal relationships which could not legitimately be described as intimate and smooth.[2] The impressions I received from those with whom I came in contact during my field work was that the villagers mutually describe each other as greedy, envious, and malicious and, as they usually put it, 'people would distribute your property while you are alive . . .'

Such character traits cannot be taken, as some psycho-analysts would maintain that they could, as indications of neurotic personalities. They are specific adjustments of individuals, and could be attributed to hard realities of economic life, to historical forces of oppression (which perhaps have made the fellah regard authority, for example, with suspicion) and to certain affective energies resulting from child-rearing practices.

Such character traits, and a climate of uneasiness and tension in the interpersonal relationships, have also been reported among the Navaho Indians and the Tepoztlanians.[3]

In this research the writer has become more than ever convinced of the great value derived from the study of 'personality' in both its social and psychological dimensions. Social norms, value systems, religious beliefs, and status, determine directly and appreciably the social behaviour of the individual and are amongst the most stabilizing factors of personality.[4]

[1] This interpretation is based on M. Fortes' 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1936, p. 604.

[2] With regard to the exaggerated use of language E. Shouby says: 'Arabs are forced to over-assert and exaggerate in almost all types of communication, as otherwise they stand [195] a good chance of being gravely misunderstood. If an Arab says exactly what he means without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may still think that he means the opposite.' See his article 'Influence of Arabic Language on Arab Prychology', in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, Summer, 1951, pp. 284–302.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village*, Chapter XIV.

[4] Audrey I. Richards, in a review of 'Personality in Nature, Society and Culture', in *Man*, January 1951.

Chapter VI

THE VILLAGE AND THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

571 The fellah should always be spoken of in the plural, because he lives always as a member of a group, if not of a crowd. In the fields, as tenant or owner, he works with his wife and children; as a hired labourer, he works in a gang, swinging the *fass* or sowing seed in a concerted rhythm.

Limited as the fellah's horizon may be within the village, he works in the open air and in public more often than in the privacy of his house. The women go in groups to draw water, the children play in swarms, daily life is collective and communal. But to understand the village community, it is necessary first of all to look at the village.

361 137 Seen from outside, as it stands up in the middle of the plain or against the pale background of the desert cliffs, it is a huddled earthy mass, compact but shapeless, and crowned with bundles of brushwood. A whitewashed building, more important than the rest — perhaps a great pigeon-cote or the house of a notable — stands out from the confusion. Palms or acacias, sycamores or *lebbekhs* rise above the mass and relieve its drabness. In the bright light of Egypt these grouped or scattered trees around or in amongst the houses give a fine effect, and Brunhes has devoted a whole page to the picture in his *Géographie Humaine*. It is not for us to imitate him. We must pierce behind this magic veil, which is all that most observers can see, and probe the reality.

361 133 As the villages date from before the period of flood-control, few of them are actually on the Nile banks. Most stand back, at distances from a hundred yards to half a mile away. Others straggle along the edge of the Upper Egyptian desert, or stand huddled on a *kôm or tell*, that is to say the ruins of an ancient village or an artificial mound or dyke. In districts where the Nile flood is no longer to

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country
571 roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the
[505 ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent.
292] When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with
494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have
[497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This
181 with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his out-
619 look in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live ([67]).

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. 181 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day... 181 185 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. 183

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." 181 185

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. 181

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. 181 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. 181 571 578 754

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]	[GIRLS]
885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .	All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.
[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.	Complete seclusion, whether married or not.
[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.	

863 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah"—the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the women-folk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member.[1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa community and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in outward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 32.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects
504 the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular
[609] manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call
[576] them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear
[576] brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope.

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also
578 between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588–9.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village
622 in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with
[625] the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main
642 complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[434] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[261] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX III

			Price in £E
Average consumption is then:			
One-half ardab of wheat per head	..	..	3
One-third ardab of barley per head	..	..	1
One-twelfth ardab of beans per head	..	..	1
Total	..	..	£E5

For the Summer Crop:

Two ardabs for husband
Two ardabs for wife (and chicken and sheep)
Half ardab for child

Average consumption one and five-sixths ardabs	..		6.50
Total expenditure on bread and beans	..	..	£E11.50

Expenditure on manufactured and prepared goods:

		£E
Clothes	..	4
Tea and sugar	..	3
Soap, kerosene, etc.	..	1
		£E19.50

The income or expenditure does not include items such as vegetables, e.g. onions and lentils, which are grown for home consumption. Yet two main items are not inserted: tobacco and meat. Meat purchases could be offset by the sale of chickens and eggs, but certainly the use of tobacco would raise the average consumption to £E20 at least.

It will be noticed that the expenditure on tea and sugar per head is proportionately large. Tea, with plenty of sugar in it, and no milk, is the fellah's main liquid intake, as he can drink tea at any time. It is almost one of the necessities of life in the village, and neither adults nor children seem to be able to do without it. Tea is taken at home and 'lubricates the mouths' in formal and informal gatherings outside dwellings and in guest houses. Two decades ago, Ali told me that food was the attraction of such gatherings, but now tea has become the fashion. It is a disgrace to omit to offer tea to a visitor. If while serving tea, or a meal for that matter, to a guest, another visitor arrives unexpectedly, the host is obliged to make another pot of tea for him, or at least insist orally on making it, perhaps later; otherwise, the latter would feel offended and consider that he was offered 'chance-tea' (sadaf), as such an offer is not considered hospitality.

Looking at the villager's budget of £E21 income and £E21 consumption, one can appreciate the precariousness of his financial solvency; and in case of misfortune his budget could be easily upset and cause him to fall into debt, an abhorrent state of affairs. One of the fellah's maxims is that 'debt is a worry at night and a humiliation during the day'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child."[1] "And to Moses, Allah addressed His word, speaking (speaking to him)."[2] So I understood that she had three boys by the names of Ibrahim, Yahya, and Mousa. On asking her how her sons were occupied she replied, "In the name of God . . . and landmarks: and by the stars they find the right way".[3] So I knew that they worked as guides on the desert routes. We went on conversing till sunset, when I offered her food to break her fast, and in gratitude, she said, "In the name of God . . . and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged".[4]

'In the morning we reached Mariam's home, and I met her three sons, [574] who thereupon killed a ram, offering me a grand repast. Mariam herself invited me to eat, reciting, "In the name of God . . . eat and drink pleasantly for what you did".[5] Before I left their place, I asked her sons the reason for their mother's talking thus, always quoting from the Koran. They told me that, one day, while she was reading the Holy Book she came across the text, "He utters not a word, but there is by him a watcher at hand".[6] She immediately took a vow not to utter any statement from that time on which was not in the Koran, for fear of falling into sin.

'The following year, I went to call on Mariam at her house, and on finding her sons there, enquired about their mother. They told me she was on her death-bed. This saddened me, so I received permission to approach her, and drawing near her asked how she felt. She answered, "In the name of God . . . and the stupor of death will come in truth: that is what you shunned".[7] I remained at her side until she died, and then we washed her, wrapped her in her shroud, prayed over her, and buried her. I stayed alone beside her grave, and when night fell, I called out to her, "What has God done to you, Mariam?" I heard a faint voice answering as if from a distance, "In the name of God . . . and reward them, because they were patient, with Garden and silk".

'Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor the intense cold. And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass.

'(Transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure.

'And they shall be made to drink therein a cup, the admixture of which shall be ginger.

'(Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil.

'And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them, you will think them to be pearls, scattered, broadcast.

[1] Koran, xix, 12. [2] Koran, iv, 164. [3] Koran, xvi, 16.
[4] Koran, ii, 272. [5] Koran, lii, 19. [6] Koran, l, 18.
[7] Koran, l, 19.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact 852
that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom.

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins 774
when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night 825
and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually 845
very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned.

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat [251] mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in [262] one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great [574] delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy men- 753
tioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his 774
soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin 761
dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 774
825
845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿĪd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

C
F
764 their sympathy to the dead man's family. The space set apart for the women is filled with wailing, but the men await the visitors in solemn silence. Everyone stands up at a new arrival, and greets him with a good wish.

C
F "The remainder to your life", they say, meaning "Whatever is cut off from his life, may God add it to yours,
574 and give you a long life." The answer is "Life is God's".
764 Everyone sits down without more ado. Then, as if he had been searching the depths of his soul for the right words, the newcomer breaks the silence. He quotes sayings, proverbs, or passages from the Holy Books, consoling sentences about the inevitability of death, resignation to the will of God, the holy life of the deceased, the rewards promised to the just, and the courage which men should show in bereavement. One saying calls forth another and one passage is echoed by another of the same kind. Tongues are loosened. The orators show their skill. It is curious to see how much sympathy is shown on the occasion of a death. To comfort the bereaved, folk think nothing of a three hours' walk or the loss of a day's work.

Friends sit up all night with the family, giving the comfort of their presence and their ready help. Death is the great leveller, and provides a centre of attraction. Religious differences disappear and social classes come closer together. Moslems and Christians meet one another in commemoration of the dead ; rich and poor are united around a tomb.

E. Fellert, S.J. (*Minia*)

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Another Contrast.

539×
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104. (The Well-to-do.)

Win gani abu ṭarbūš,
la'ul-lo: ya marḥábe!
we-afriš-lo is-serīr
wa'allī-lo-l-martabe
5 *wazemzem-lo-l-fingal*
wa'ul-lo: itfaḍḍal gabe!

If someone with a ṭarbūsh comes to me,
I will say to him: "Welcome!"
And make the bed ready for him,
And make the mattress high,
5 And offer him the (coffee-) cup, [272]
And say to him: "Please thee, without payment!"

1. The ṭarbūsh is the head-covering of officials and well-to-do citizens (see No. 24). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

105. (The Poor.)

×539
554
574

Win gāni abu libde,
la'ul-lo: rūḥ, kide,
ya 'alīl ez-zō', ya ḫēb er-raga!
rūḥ taḥt el-behaim
5 *we-šīl waḥlāt iš-šite!*

But if someone with a felt cap comes to me
I will say to him: "Get out of the way; so!
Thou unpolished, miserable fellow!
Go among the cattle
5 And cart off the winter's dung!"

[291] 1. The felt cap is the head-covering of the poor peasants (see No. 56).
2. So! accompanied by a motion of the hand.
3. Miserable, literally: disappointed in his hopes.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[183] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[182] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[179] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[182] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or short feet (*tablich*); among richer people a shield-like metal plate (*sanich*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo, camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the soaked *bamiyehs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh* are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands, and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus, was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians, with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the nummulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inhabitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking a piece now from this, now from that.

After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 514
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [182]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of [171]
their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*esmk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, [264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the 888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 *supporters*. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[702] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the cafés are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
● 574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
864 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [290]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
[i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analysis]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

[796] [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [443] [252] [521] [526]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
607 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be
[119] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[291] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 504 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk [609] eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call [576] them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear [576] brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope.

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also 578 between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 388–9.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 857 593

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

+857 589 On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well [155] explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and [156] hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive [576] insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa [162] there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling [155] rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 143.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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182 evaluate such institutions purely from the point of view of their immediate economic rationality and not as means of 'mutual adjustment of purposes in a total situation'. In such above-mentioned occasions, one can hardly fail to note the social values connected with prestige and the elements of reciprocity embodied in these forms of celebrations. Moreover, one cannot ignore the validity of their educative and cohesive functions. Since reciprocity is one of the major stabilizing forces in this community, its importance requires 'spinning out', since 'a solitary presentation of the principle would be ineffective'.[1] The economic method of interpreting social phenomena is one devised by particular workers as a means of considering such phenomena in the light of their particular field, and cannot be accepted as the whole or the sole explanation. The rationality of ceremonies and the functionalism of the extended family must be interpreted in the light of the community's social ends. In this connection, Firth remarks that '. . . economic activity is subordinate to social ends. It is only by studying those ends that one can see how particular economic systems work'.[2] It was pointed out how social and religious values render dealing in usury, or acceptance of compensation, repulsive to the moral code of this community. On the other hand, social prestige and rivalry [578] combined with a weak ego-structure would explain why law-suits about land or other quarrels can be pursued with seemingly endless effort and expense, to the extent that such procedures might cost both sides more than the market value of the object under dispute.

178 Failure to assess social facts in their total cultural perspective has often 182 militated against the best intentions of reformers. Compulsory education in terms of abolishing illiteracy has yielded negligible results, as shown earlier, even compared with the expenditure allocated to it. It has been related to neither the cultural needs nor the technical skills required in rural communities. Campaigns against infectious diseases must take into account the fact that, to the villagers, fear of contagion is subordinate to the rendering of reciprocal social obligation connected with sickness. The preference for reserving and offering the 'best food' to guests or strangers rather than be eaten by the members of the family for its 'nutritional value' must be viewed and understood first in terms of 'the people's values' concerning hospitality and generosity.

178 The adherence to traditional customs, beliefs, ways of thinking and [156] living is the basis of the peasants' psychological security. That peasants rigidly adhere to their traditions and do not listen to 'reason' as explained to them by scientists or government officials has its root cause in this

[1] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 400. It is worth noting that in this community, as well as in many other parts of Egypt, the standardised social comments are legion as are also the respective responses in occasions of work, eating, drinking, building a house, after having a haircut, after toilet, on wearing new clothes, after having a bath, and on many other occasions for which good manners necessitate a particular expression or ejaculation and responding to it in a particular way. [576]

[2] R. Firth, *Elements of Social Organization*, p. 133.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the
753 colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F 796 789

thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

F [515] [823]

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

F 796 789 278

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

F C [291]

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

F [507]

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

C 796

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33.

[2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

with a little yellow sand in front of him. To him resort the illiterate, lazy rabble that he may foretell to them their dark future and their unfortunate fate. He draws lines on the sand with his finger, after the patient has crossed his palm with silver (for they imagine that the veils of hidden tidings are not raised except after the payment of white money). Then he says to him, "You are a poor man. There is a tall, brown fellow" (hereupon he adds a description of him), "who speaks evil of you behind your back and seeks to accomplish your ruin"; or, "There is a girl who sadly weeps for you night and day"; or, "You are restless in your thoughts, and there is a knotty problem ahead of you which will, if Allah allows it, be solved." And in like manner he manufactures all kinds and varieties of stories and tales, and if it is in agreement with what circulates in his mind, then the enquirer will rise and kiss the hand of the fortune-teller in gratitude for his goodness since he has scattered from before his eyes the clouds of doubt, which hindered him from a knowledge of future events.

XIII

SHELL DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-WADA')

In this branch of pernicious beliefs the practitioners are Sudanese women. One of them seats herself, like her countryman, in the middle [p. 34] of the road with a collection in front of her of sea-shells, and fragments of minerals, green and red and black, each with a special name indicative of something that is passionately desired. Their clients are mostly women who had no education in their youth, and now that they have grown up have become submissive to the power of the imagination. One of them comes to the Sudanese hag and divulges to her her complaint of being jilted by her sweetheart, and his abandonment of her and his trifling with her; or, she describes to her the anger of her husband towards her and his driving her from his house; or, that she is barren, etc. Then when

8:Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations.

a) General.

539x
647
554
466

24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi 'a'id 'ala-l-'elwe
biṭ-ṭarbûš wer-ra'abe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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35.

×539
466

El-'afu, ya bē, yafendina,
win kunna 'ibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraḍḍina!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [57] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

[593] 2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 2. Another said: rabbīna, raḍḍīna.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

45.

×539 As in the preceding song, the person addressed, is the caravan-driver.

Istanne telāt daragāt,
lamma awadda' rufa'āti
wa'ul-luhum:
'arzam Allah agrukum fiye!

Wait three degrees,
That I may take leave of my companions
And say to them:
[572] "May Allah bless you richly for all that ye have done for me!"

1. Three degrees on the primitive sun-dial, which is made [405] [805] by thrusting a stick into the ground. According to it, the periods of work at the shādūf are regulated.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

46.

Ṣabiḥ mesāfir, gā ḥabībi yewadda'ni, 539x
biki u-ball el-maḥarim. 'ultê-lo: lē ya'ni? 576
'al-li: u''ud ḥadāye telāt sa'āt tesalltni.
Walla, furā' el-ḥabāib ṣa'b, ya rabbi!

In the morning, as I was starting on a journey, my
beloved came to take leave of me.
Her handkerchiefs were drenched with tears. I said
to her: "Wherefore?"
She said: "O stay with me three hours, that thou
mayest comfort me!"
Truly, the parting of lovers is grievous, O my Lord!

1. "Three", is used in such songs elsewhere also, as a [801]
round number; compare No. 45.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

50.

Good Company.

539*
576●

Words of gratitude to parting visitors.

Lēla sa'īde!
bu-ru'yākum ḥuṣāli rāḥ.
U-kān me'i ṛēz,
sa'et šāfkum 'am rāḥ.

Good night!
At sight of you, my trouble vanished.
Vexation lodged with me,
But when it saw you, it rose and left.

[P. 54 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [465]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-ward ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʾāš ʿalē dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukūb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled hero!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 7 and No. 7, l. 2.

5. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

x 539 563 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are [576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir mālya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šawirtê ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintê šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] [312] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.

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554 one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the
423 first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while
[577] the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

423 As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors,
558 then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families
425 had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

427 Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

554 If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land
[425] is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of
[577] parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing
[857] a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan.
[539] The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

423 From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pah' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [994] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [961]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertiliser he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that [611] they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, immature children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of [586] seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or [855] maternal grandmother.

The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations [577] to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be sitting while his father is standing. Of course, he cannot smoke in his father's presence, or do anything that might imply that he is not giving full attention to his father. 593

Amongst the children, the eldest son is favoured by his parents as he is the first to relieve his father of some of his tasks. The importance of age and sex in parents' treatment of their children shows itself, for instance, in the distribution of meat. Boys, on the whole, receive more than girls, and the older gets more than the younger. To vary this order is regarded as one of the means of reward or punishment for the children. An elder son is not expected to argue 'face to face' with his father if the latter refuses any of the former's demands. In this case he has to send a messenger to negotiate with his father. Complete identification with the father is reflected in the saying, 'Your father's enemy is your enemy and your father's friend is your friend', which is also a further evidence of the importance of family and clan solidarity. The observance of the proper rules of conduct with parents as well as with other relatives is the tangible attribute of children described as 'muaddabeen' meaning disciplined (often wrongly translated literally as 'polite'). In his role, the father has to combine discipline backed by moral sanctions.[1] [861] [577]

The relations of children to the mother are certainly warmer, intimate and more affectionate. The mother's tenderness and affection for her children should be repaid in obedience, service and respect. Ali told me that a mother's prayers for her children are the most effective appeal to God. Respect and regard for her is enjoined upon her sons and daughters by the Koran and the Prophetic tradition that says 'Paradise is at the feet of mothers'.

The relationship between brothers is expected to be one of complete solidarity. The common saying goes: 'Support your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed.' If a mother sees her sons squabbling over anything, she admonishes, asking them to deal with each other 'like brothers'. The admonition is also exercised when a boy stranger comes to visit the family, and the boys are asked to go out and play 'like brothers'. However, the first-born has a prominent position among his brothers and sisters. He acts as his father's representative. He gives orders to the younger brothers and sisters, and at least threatens them with punishment, sometimes telling his father. Other members of the family acknowledge and even support the prerogative of the first-born son. But, on the whole, brothers are expected to form a united front and act as 'two heads under one cap'. Older married brothers are usually held to be responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters after the death of the father.

Yet, in spite of the fact that brothers are expected to stand by each other through thick and thin, they are not encouraged to walk, sit or play together, especially after the age of eleven or twelve. If two or three brothers

[1] M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society' (summary of a lecture given in *Man*, Vol. LI, May 1951).

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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [847] [577]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the infant to social discipline as early as possible.[2] 862 [828]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father, as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognises that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people.

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomised in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God.

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3]

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the suppressed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347.

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located.

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [861] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

● 577 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [859] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension. Fear, moreover, is an efficient lever for the maintenance of social cohesion in the pattern of father-son relationship, and hence it is not surprising to find the common saying that 'fear is a blissful thing' (al khof baraka). 577 [156]

The popular sayings connected with the administering of punishment are also varied and inconsistent, perhaps to maintain a balance and to avoid excess. On the one hand one hears phrases such as 'If you don't beat the child, nothing good would come out of him', 'The stick is for the disobedient', 'Those who do not feel, the stick would make them feel'. On the other hand, there are other sayings such as 'The stick makes the boy dumb'. 'The threat would have no effect on those who do not obey spontaneously', It is considered, however, that childhood is the most appropriate period for punishing and disciplining the child. It is said that the child during this time is like the maize plant in its second irrigation (this irrigation is considered to be important for the plant's growth and is preceded by the pulling out of the grass and other weeds). The concentration of punishment at this period is justified on the grounds that the boy or the girl at this stage is neither too young nor too old to learn. The only form of corporal punishment administered to adolescents on some rare occasions is slapping. 861

However, the administering of punishment by parents to children is checked from being unduly excessive by other relatives, neighbours or other adults who happen to be present. Mediation (literally separation—'hajazat') as institutionalized in the 'Arab council' is an important force in the legal and social functioning of the community.[1] It is practised by children themselves and even mock fights are sometimes played by them to enjoy the wranglings of conciliation similar to those amongst the adults. Some children told me that on seeing their parents quarrelling, they immediately go out of the house to invite one of their close relatives for mediation. Adults are also expected to stop children's fights if they happen to be passing by, and even punish the disputants.[2] [857] [578]

It is appropriate here to evaluate the period of childhood in Silwa, in comparison with their period of infancy. With the exception of observing sex and religious norms, childhood in Silwa is the period through which a boy or a girl experiences a great number of the pressures of socialization. Some modern anthropologists have pointed out the importance of discontinuities or inconsistencies in child-rearing practices as relevant cultural data especially in connection with personality organization.[3] Esther Goldfrank, for instance, postulates four categories of societies with regard to

[1] See Chapter II. [2] See Appendix X, 'Story Completion'.
[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning', in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. by Kluckhohn and Murray, p. 474.

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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
● 577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
542 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
150 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[906] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organised* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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582 obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the
577 statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

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FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

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In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

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[554]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

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believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 597 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 [12]

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

586 593 tion, especially amongst the womenfolk, might appear tragi-comic when they harp endlessly upon the shortcomings of the spouses, and their respective families. Complaints and gossip are heard about things such as the inability to provide the right amount of henna for the bride; or the bride's family's bad cooking of the groom's pigeons; the quality of the girl's jewellery and endless small things which reveal the difficulties of the adjustments of the individual family to an equally important wider circle of the joint family.

586 The following table shows that the percentages of divorce for the whole country reach their highest during the first two years of marriage.

TABLE IV

Relation between divorce and the duration of marriage between 1942 and 1946 in Egypt

Duration of marriage	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
Less than a month	4·20	4·31	4·46	3·88	3·99
One–six months	14·60	15·70	16·30	14·50	14·20
Six months–one year	12·50	13·10	14·40	14·60	13·05
One–two years	18·4	18·10	20·90	20·30	20·30
Two–three years	11·0	11·90	13·60	14·50	13·70
Three–four years	7·55	9·05	8·34	7·82	8·60
Four–five years	5·80	4·87	5·04	5·53	5·40
Five–ten years	15·30	13·10	13·70	12·30	11·90
Ten–fifteen years	5·42	5·23	5·10	4·63	4·74
Fifteen–twenty years	2·42	2·40	2·32	2·12	2·00
Twenty years and more	2·78	2·66	2·38	2·09	2·12[1]

Here a short note on divorce seems necessary. The right and power to divorce one's wife is part of the male ethos in this community. According to Moslem law (Sharia) a man can divorce his wife twice and on both occasions can take her back. If he repeats any formula of divorce three times or says, 'You are divorced threefold' (talga bi attalati), then the divorce is final; and husband and wife can only remarry on certain conditions.[2] Recently, in Egypt, the threefold formula of divorce has come to be regarded as one statement, and husband and wife can reunite immediately after its utterance if they wish.

The word 'divorce' is also used as a conditional oath by men to convince others of the truth of a statement, or to force them to accept an offer or conform to a desire.[3]

[1] These percentages are worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 50 (in Arabic). [2] Cf. S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*.
[3] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, pp. 297–8.

1; Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 831 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy
[595] is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

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FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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887 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree,
586 they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *'omdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

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FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

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I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

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To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of [586] this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

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entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

F A 586

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

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It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

F A 764 778 823

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

F [794]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fiḳīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.

[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.

[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

A [113]

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

E F 113

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand.

F [586]

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages.

F [162 872]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14.

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

E F [796 527]

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.)

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and 595
all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an additional wife because his first one has not presented him [842]
with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility. And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when 586
the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change of wares, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time. This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if [554]
he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuccessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female 567
slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The 586
father must always maintain the children that any divorced wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore, forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this and other reasons it is very common among the higher [595]
classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to these matters, since the state does not concern itself about matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesiastical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some weak attempts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

586 at reconciliation, has always to give effect to the expressed wish of the husband. The wife also can press for a divorce, and is not, therefore, devoid of all rights; but in this case, besides losing her maintenance, she also, as a rule, loses the [583] jointure that would otherwise fall to be paid to her by the husband as stipulated in the marriage contract. The divorce cannot be judicially forced from the husband, he must say the words "Thou art repudiated," and if he will not do so he has to give his wife a *bêt shêr 'ai*, that is, a separate dwelling and maintenance; it is a kind of divorce *a mensa et thoro.* During the continuance of this relationship the woman can- [587] not marry again, though of course the husband can. But during the proceedings, with which a multitude of laymen, both summoned and unsummoned, mix themselves up, the husband often becomes morally pliant, or is induced by cunning to utter the words, whereupon the case at once comes to an end. The phrase "thou art repudiated" is fatally momentous, the mere utterance of it, even in the heat of a quarrel, results in separation, and "thrice repudiated" even in complete divorce (see below). If a person writes these words down and in joke asks a Mohammedan to read them, he absolutely refuses to read them aloud. The asseveration "by repudiation," or stronger "by threefold repudiation," is equivalent to a solemn oath. The greater number of disputes in cases of matrimonial separation arise on account of the children, whom neither the father nor mother would like to part with. They, together with the matter of expense, are what unites most closely the bonds of marriage, otherwise so loose. Up to a certain age, which differs among the various so-called sects of Mohammedans—among the Hana- [595] fites, for instance, being the seventh year, among the Shafaites the second—the child remains with its mother, while the father pays for its support, and in return has the right of seeing it as often as he wishes. Henceforth the father, if he has satisfactorily supported it hitherto, can take the child altogether to himself, and he usually does so if it is a boy.

[587] The divorced wife returns to her parents, who generally soon succeed in finding another settlement for her. In a

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great many cases the separation is only temporary, the husband and wife make up their quarrel and come together again without any farther formalities than the consent of the kadi. When the severest form of divorce has been pronounced, however, namely, with the formula of threefold repudiation, a reunion becomes not such an easy matter. For such cases there exists the well known and peculiar law of the *mostahill* (literally "permission-maker"). A third person has formally to marry the divorced woman and put her away again, whereupon the husband can again take back his former wife. Men who are endowed with the minimum of personal advantages are usually selected to act as these middle men, and they are paid for their welcome services. Cases of this sort are certainly rare, being considered disgraceful. It sometimes happens also that the pair joined in this momentary marriage take each other's fancy, the intermediary will not give up the woman joined to him, and no power can tear them asunder if they do not wish it. The law just mentioned is said to be founded on the awakening of jealousy. 586 587

The man of the middle and lower ranks who has more than one wife usually has his harem, with children and attendants, in different houses, or in different portions of the same house specially constructed for the purpose; and in order to give satisfaction to all parties, a good polygamous husband eats and sleeps in regular alternation, the one day in the house of one wife, the next in that of another. These look upon themselves as relatives, and from time to time pay each other at least ceremonial visits. Indeed there are a great many examples of several wives living together peacefully, obediently, and free from jealousy. Of quarrels arising from jealousy much less is heard than one would have beforehand assumed. By his supreme powers the husband maintains order, and jealousy frequently takes even the form of a praiseworthy struggle how each wife may appear more amiable in the eyes of her husband than her rivals. Most women give up from the first the idea of requiring their husband to remain true to them, and jealous women are even laughed at by their female friends. The ideal romantic love 595 [831]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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The low 000

rank they hold in the intellectual world is not a consequence of want of understanding, but of want of knowledge; it is a consequence of their stagnating religion, and of the hostility of former governments to enlightenment. Besides being forbidden between very near relatives, marriage is also forbidden between such as have been suckled at the same breast. Among the ancient Egyptians, as already mentioned, marriages were permitted even between brothers and sisters. 582

At the preliminary betrothal the marriage contract is made between the fathers or guardians on both sides. The father agrees to pay to the father-in-law of his son a certain sum, and part of this is paid at once, the other part is always tied up and settled upon the wife in case she should happen to be divorced. These payments, however, must not be understood as if the parents were simply selling their daughter; the "bride's treasure" is in most cases spent on clothes and ornaments for the bride, and the bridegroom often gives these directly instead of money. And the bride who brings nothing to her husband except her person, lays up for herself from this bride's treasure a fund for cases of misfortune. If the wife has any independent means she does not share it with her husband—it remains her personal property. In the East, accordingly, mercenary marriages—so incompatible with manly dignity—are unknown. 583 [584] [586] 421

On the evening of the wedding-day is held the marriage banquet, on which great sums are often expended by the more wealthy. Everybody in the place is invited to the house of the bride's parents; whole hecatombs (this is often literally correct) of sheep are slaughtered and devoured with a rapidity that has become proverbial, and with the most voracious appetite. Only the very poorest confine themselves to inviting none but the members of their intimate family circle. 585 [262]

In the course of the day the bride and bridegroom frequently take a bath, to which they often proceed in grand procession. In other cases the bridegroom, when evening has come, takes off his clothes in front of the house before the gaping crowds, and has his whole body soaped and bathed by the barber. The chief festivity does not take place, however, until nightfall. [515]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [826]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it ([37]). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to 587 clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming 515 out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* ([38]) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587 ●
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *ʿafārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *ʿafrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *ʿafārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *ʿafrīteh* (feminine form of *ʿafrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut
[155] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[912]

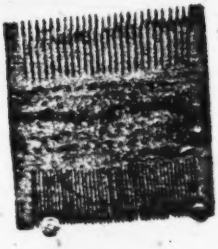


FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[912]

789 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as
832 well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one
302 of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals
●588 the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it
302 is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [826]

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably
291 adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen [848] virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery com- [684] mitted by a woman was punished with drowning down to a short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

1: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately [843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives [843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the [591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk [834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs [825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but [851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

585 606 might have been the relations between him and them before marriage, the newly created situation makes him no longer on familiar social terms with them. Traditionally, to remove this 'avoidance' the bridegroom's family should send within the first two months of marriage a ram to the bride's family as a 'reconciliation'.[1]

This avoidance could be regarded as a recognition that, in the initial stages of marriage, much of the behaviour of the married man to the family of his spouse has to be modified and reoriented. Even if he is married to his cousin, avoidance of her parents is required as a token of respect. Adoption of new phrases in reference to his in-laws, house habits of reserve, announcing his entrance into the house, manner of dress and similar items of etiquette must be observed by the newly married groom. In other words, previous informality and intimacy are replaced by a degree of formality to show consideration for the new ties of marriage.

This avoidance could also be considered as a manifestation that the [591] husband, living in his matrilocal residence, feels uneasy and embarrassed in the home of a comparatively alien family; his ultimate home will be his patrilineal house to which he eventually takes his wife.[2] This custom also implies the psychological stresses involved in the new situation, where it is difficult to render the demands of consanguinity and affinity compatible, and where the support of the larger family unit has to be sustained for the maintenance of the newly created bonds of the individual family.[3]

Nadel explains such an avoidance in a similar manner. He maintains that in such a situation spontaneous shame and conventionalized sexual shame appear combined; for these cultural features express (and prevent) both the embarrassment between strangers (in a kinship sense) who are thrown together by marriage, and the embarrassment that springs from the awareness of the sexual occasion responsible for this new relationship.[4]

Such social procedures are implicit cultural solutions for smoothing transition from one state of life to another requiring concomitant adjustment and reorganization.

[1] Although avoidance between bridegroom and parents-in-law is still strictly observed, the breaking away from it does not necessarily have to be achieved through a gift of a [108] 'slaughter', but occurs quite often nowadays through the exigencies of everyday life after the lapse of some time.

[2] This is the ideal course to be taken, but, as mentioned earlier, other factors, e.g. lack of space in his father's house, the bride's parents' attachment to their daughter and her children, might keep the husband in his matrilocal residence for years.

[3] This explanation is based on a similar situation referred to by R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 343. This avoidance lends itself to psycho-analytical interpretation in terms of incestuous taboo. The uneasiness in the newly created situation could also be inferred from the 'mock fight' which could be classified, according to Van Gennep, as one of the 'rites de separation', while exchange of gifts and the partaking of food would fall in the category of 'rites d'agrégation'. Cf. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, p. 198.

[4] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 352. The psycho-analytical interpretation for such a taboo, according to Roheim, is that in this way an attempt is made to separate the wife from the mother, genitality from orality, and infantile dependency. *Psycho-analysis and Anthropology*, p. 423.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [604] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press [477] in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [294] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the [291] older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by 178 outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village [609] economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [477] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [592] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

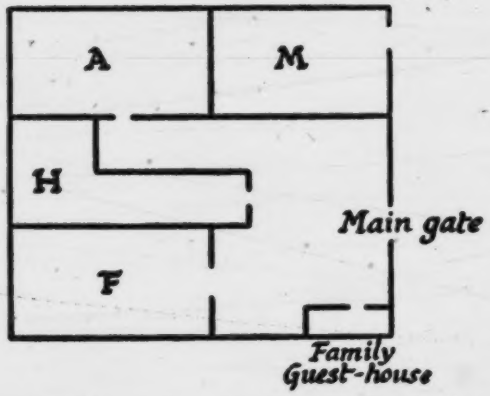
[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 52–3.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

As married boys can have no property

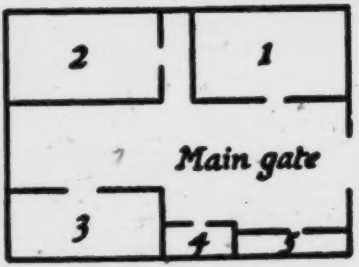
of their own as long as their father is alive, they have to live and work with him. Whether two married brothers with their families form one family living in one household, depends on whether they work co-operatively on the land after their father's death or whether they divide it. The family as an economic unit is identified with its common entrance to the house. This entrance must be distinguished from many houses which have a single main gate behind which there are other entrances. The main gate could be identified with the extended family whose members no longer form an economic unit. 592 596

The following sketch illustrates a typical example of a compound of an extended family. 596



X, the father of A, M and F and the grandfather of H, was the owner of this house site. After his death the two brothers M and A, their sister F and their nephew H wanted to divide their inheritance. During their prolonged quarrel over the land, they divided the house amongst them. As M was so annoyed with his brother A he decided not to enter the house from the same door A used, and built a separate entrance for himself. A, H and F, although constituting separate economic family units, still share the same main entrance and the compound is referred to as X's house. [578] 592

The following household forms one economic unit in spite of the different members composing it.



1 represents the part of the head of the family with his unmarried children; 2 represents his mother and his widowed sister who have both transferred their land to the head of the family; 3 represents his half-sister, who is also a widow and has a young

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592 daughter; 4 his son and wife; 5 place reserved for animals. In this case, the half-sister has not transferred her share of land to her brother but rents it to him.

596 There is no institutionalized economic co-operation between the members of an extended family, if they are not living in one house. If they are on good terms, economic mutual assistance in borrowing money, animals, or crops may take place. Indeed it is significant that the extended family is not resorted to as much for economic help as has been expected. The economic strength of the extended family and the harmonious relationships between its members are not what is usually assumed by writers on social affairs in Egypt.[1]

However, the unity of the extended family is expected in questions related to public and formal occasions. The extended family is publicly responsible for the general conduct and certain disciplinary measures to redress the offences of its members against law and order, as we shall see later. Members of the extended family are also expected to render support to each other on occasions of offering hospitality, at circumcision, wedding [613] or funeral ceremonies. On the whole, the extended family could be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal economic family and the clan, shouldering the social responsibility for the smaller units and held accountable for their behaviour before the clan. It is only on the social level of public issues that public opinion in the village considers the family as a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses.[2]

613 The extended families merge into the clan, and the village is composed
616 of nine clans (kabail), each tracing its descent in the patrilineal line to one common ancestor. Further, the nine clans are grouped in two main sections (hissa), each section belonging to a common progenitor, the two progenitors being brothers. One section is called 'Onab related to 'On, the brother of Mousa who is the progenitor of the Musiab section. The 'Onab section is divided into five clans, named: Diabab, Hasaballab, M'alliab, Waznab and Gharamab, whilst the Musiab is divided into four clans called: Marazik, 'Atamni, 'Amrab and Brahimab.[3]

616 It is locally accepted that each section represents half the population of the village, with the majority of the Musiab having their residence in the northern part, while the majority of the 'Onab reside mainly in the southern part. Between the two sections there is complete freedom of intermarriage

[1] The writer is under the impression, from his general observation, that the extended family seems to be stronger and more effective as an economic unit amongst big landowning families as distinct from what obtains in Silwa, a community of small landowners.

[2] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[3] Ab, the termination of the names of these clans, according to C. G. Seligman and Brenda Seligman, cannot be the Arabic ab—father. The suffix is common among the Beja tribal names. 'The Kababish, a Sudan Arab Tribe', *Harvard African Studies*, Vol. II, 1918, footnote, p. 113.

352 and toilet use there is a large flat tub (*tisht*) which serves
353 as both laundry-basin and bath, a fragment of mirror, and
296 a big wooden chest which may hold almost anything. This
515 was a gift at the betrothal, and its crude colours are reminders of a red-letter day. "In this chest near the oven, whose key the mistress of the house wears at her neck, I have seen all jumbled together eggs, pepper, cheese, rags, needles and thread, several necklaces and a packet of *kohl*." This from the letter of a surprised French missionary.

181 The close proximity of men, cattle and soil is as noticeable
356 in the fellah's house as in the field and the village. It is a reflection of the fellah's social level and manner of life. Like house, like household.

The fellah's dependence on soil, sun and water extends even to his house. He himself is of the earth, earthy, through his labour and his food, in his diseases and finally in his death. His house no less, by the material of which it is made — floor, walls, roof and all — and by its very squatness is a part of the earth.

342 The fellah lives out of doors because of the lack of
362 comfort in his home, which is no more than an unfurnished
181 sleeping-place and a store-room, a part of the crowded camp
183 which is the village.

All the houses are alike. The fellaheen have little individuality; each is an atomised unit of the mass, and his household but one cell in the agricultural hive. At the same time there is little or no space reserved for agricultural uses. The fellah works for others, and does not store the produce of the land for himself.

Yet this dwelling, which lacks so much that we deem essential, is so well adapted to its tenants and their habits that they will change or rather deform into its likeness any better-appointed house built for them on a model *'ezba*.

342 A house on an *'ezba* belongs to the owner, one in the
421 village to the fellah. House and site together are worth at the most L.E. 25. There is no rent or house tax to pay. On an *'ezba* the dwelling enters into the conditions of lease or share-tenancy. In the village it belongs to the head of the family.

592 In this homestead scarcely larger than himself the fellah leads a life of his own, no longer as a serf but as a master. Each house contains a large family, including very often, besides the father and mother, four or five children, a grand-

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [331]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (").

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 631 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relation-
[837] ship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her
[264] husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various
[56] chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes cer-
[462] tain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain.
[231] She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

[611] The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, immature children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or maternal grandmother.

[586]

[855]

The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

[577]

One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

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be sitting while his father is standing. Of course, he cannot smoke in his father's presence, or do anything that might imply that he is not giving full attention to his father. 593

Amongst the children, the eldest son is favoured by his parents as he is the first to relieve his father of some of his tasks. The importance of age and sex in parents' treatment of their children shows itself, for instance, in the distribution of meat. Boys, on the whole, receive more than girls, and the older gets more than the younger. To vary this order is regarded as one of the means of reward or punishment for the children. An elder son is not expected to argue 'face to face' with his father if the latter refuses any of the former's demands. In this case he has to send a messenger to negotiate with his father. Complete identification with the father is reflected in the saying, 'Your father's enemy is your enemy and your father's friend is your friend', which is also a further evidence of the importance of family and clan solidarity. The observance of the proper rules of conduct with parents as well as with other relatives is the tangible attribute of children described as 'muaddabeen' meaning disciplined (often wrongly translated literally as 'polite'). In his role, the father has to combine discipline backed by moral sanctions.[1] [861] [577]

The relations of children to the mother are certainly warmer, intimate and more affectionate. The mother's tenderness and affection for her children should be repaid in obedience, service and respect. Ali told me that a mother's prayers for her children are the most effective appeal to God. Respect and regard for her is enjoined upon her sons and daughters by the Koran and the Prophetic tradition that says 'Paradise is at the feet of mothers'.

The relationship between brothers is expected to be one of complete solidarity. The common saying goes: 'Support your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed.' If a mother sees her sons squabbling over anything, she admonishes, asking them to deal with each other 'like brothers'. The admonition is also exercised when a boy stranger comes to visit the family, and the boys are asked to go out and play 'like brothers'. However, the first-born has a prominent position among his brothers and sisters. He acts as his father's representative. He gives orders to the younger brothers and sisters, and at least threatens them with punishment, sometimes telling his father. Other members of the family acknowledge and even support the prerogative of the first-born son. But, on the whole, brothers are expected to form a united front and act as 'two heads under one cap'. Older married brothers are usually held to be responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters after the death of the father.

Yet, in spite of the fact that brothers are expected to stand by each other through thick and thin, they are not encouraged to walk, sit or play together, especially after the age of eleven or twelve. If two or three brothers

[1] M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society' (summary of a lecture given in *Man*, Vol. LI, May 1951).

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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers.

The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are [586] socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often [736] than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, 593 whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction [598] between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315-16.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye.

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation.

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action.

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success.

Another intereting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 593 A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of [604] orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle [788] over her body on her return.

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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

858 My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to
[595] have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

842 My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

858 It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554
and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562
sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844]
ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431]
those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the
father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851]
wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one,
or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased
by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy
even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than
seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [980]
'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most
effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no
brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of
'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar-
riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584]
marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful
rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as
well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma.
Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are
taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is
brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and
this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562
arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593
is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is
always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the
one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they
get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My
informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an
occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her
father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers
are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by
sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father
as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583]
when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of
gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the
father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides
a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the
song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her
parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence
her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being precocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 150–1.

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865 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own
593 care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the
[152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the
[853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did
865 not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next
[862] oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would
CCD 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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called, the 'last of the bunch', as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865
is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858
pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865
mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593
is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152
sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [151]
two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865
tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593
old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152
that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg 155
fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154]
a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154]
children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incen- [626] tives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over, and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 857 573

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Hag Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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867 a son meeting his father after a long absence, as well as the greeting of adults for religious men and those who are believed to be endowed with 'baraka'—holiness.

Whilst in the first five or six years the child's respect for its parents and elders is inculcated mainly through physical gestures and intimacy, the respect later on is expected in terms of a decrease in word intimacy and physical proximity. Moreover, certain manners must be observed, such as walking behind the father or an elder and not abreast of him, standing up or at least sitting properly on the ground on his approach, dismounting from donkey-back on seeing the father in a formal gathering, and so on. Whether in attending to the hand-washing of guests, the distribution of tea amongst them, or in shaking hands with them, a fairly definite order of precedence is observed by the child and even by adults themselves. On the whole, with the progress of the child in age, details of etiquette are gradually enforced upon him. It is also interesting to note in this respect that a father when taking his son of four or five years to the field, would make him ride behind him and not in front, and one cannot argue that this is merely a matter of convenience as fathers who take their sons in front of them are considered to be spoiling them.

It is important here to distinguish between two categories of behaviour with regard to respect relationships, and this distinction is mainly related to whether there are any outsiders or public onlookers. The child, for instance, is allowed a certain amount of latitude in conforming to the external tokens of respect to its parents in the intimate circle of the family, for example, to sit on the bed while the father is sitting on the ground, to make himself a nuisance with the mother, or to hit back when she scolds him. Yet this is severely disapproved of and punished if there is a visitor in the house, or if done outside the house. This is the root of the absolute bonds of kinship behaviour on formal occasions. No plea could absolve the person from not fulfilling his obligations towards his relatives on public occasions such as mourning or exchange of gifts on ceremonial occasions. The failure to fulfil such obligations, as the villagers put it, 'makes a special history for the person'. The distinction between formal and informal behaviour gradually recedes as the child grows older and he is supposed to approach progressively for all occasions the formal expectations of behaviour.[1]

● 593 The general pattern of behaviour between the child and its elders is thus largely one of dominance, submission couched in the term 'filial piety'. The filial sentiment, however, is not taught to or expressed by the child in any sentimental phrases. It was a great joke amongst the children [369] in one neighbourhood to repeat statements of an urban child whom they heard saying 'I love my father, I love my mother'. Such open expressions

[1] R. Firth distinguishes between formal and informal behaviour. In the latter there are more individual differences and variations; while the former is enjoined upon each member of the society and the observance and fulfilment of formal behaviour is regarded as the sure test for the harmonious functioning of society. *We, the Tikopia*, p. 173.

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of filial sentiment are considered by the children as one of the ways in which Cairo people spoil their sons and daughters. Children's respect for and devotion to parents must be absolute and unconditional and do not have to be verbalized. Yet, on the other hand, the appeal to please the mother or father is usually invoked to persuade the child to behave properly or to perform certain duties. 'Fetch fuel for mother so that she can say that her daughter is good.' 'Wear this garment so that uncle's people will say they have a good boy.' While the affection of blood relatives is used to stimulate and motivate the child, he is not expected to express his sentiment towards them directly.

During early childhood, kinship terms are learnt, and by the age of five, the children I spoke to were quite capable of telling the categories of paternal uncle and aunt, maternal uncle and aunt, cousins and nephews and nieces. As anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out, the child does not start off in life with a full set of kinship terms, but gradually, and not without difficulty, fits itself into the framework provided for it by its elders.[1] During its development, contacts and associations, a child begins to know what type of behaviour and sentiment is expected from him towards different relatives. In terms of behaviour the above-mentioned children distinguished between those closely-related children with whom they could play freely, more co-operatively, and possibly with more superficial wrangling, and those with whom they could not play in the same way; between those from whom they could demand a piece of bread or a bit of onion, and those from whom they could not; between those who could, without suspecting malicious intentions, accept their curses and those who would resent such curses. They also knew that their close relatives are those by whom they can be protected or punished, and whom they fear and love, and to whose houses they can stray, accepting food without fear of being punished by the parents. One of the children told me that his mother punished him for going with another boy to the latter's house. She rebuked him by saying that those who offered him food would call him a son of beggars, and that it would have been quite different had he gone to his grandfather's people. Children who stray quite often into houses which are not those of close relatives, are sometimes dubbed by their elders as paupers ('fakeers', who roam about and knock at the gate of Allah). Such an excuse is given by the elders to avoid the sense of shame that their children might bring to them. In this way a child is made to learn the difference between the easy flow of mutual obligations between close relatives and the strain of accepting hospitality from distant people which is considered almost as a debt. On such occasions, one also sees the importance of parental obligations towards their children, whose hunger would reflect on their parental duties and prestige.[2]

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 272.
[2] For such connection between hunger and prestige, see Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, pp. 43-4.

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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

577 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [859] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

In Artas, the Palestinian village studied by Granqvist, the uneasiness in this stage of adjustment presents itself in a different way. As marriage in Artas is in the patrilocal residence, the bride, before leaving her family, would make demands on the bridegroom's family and make sure that her family's wishes have been fulfilled, before she is placed on the camel going to her bridegroom's house.[1] 171

As for the bride, she now starts her seclusion in the house till she brings forth a child and is never allowed to go out and never seen by a married man, even her husband's father and her married brothers. Her main job is to attend to her husband, to receive him when he knocks at the door, and to serve food to him. One of the main difficulties of newly married girls is their adjustment to the new situation, where they must break away from their previous life and assume a responsible role. The difficulties, however, are smoothed out in the matrilocal marriage period, where the bride's mother is really the one who, behind the scenes, provides her son-in-law with his requirements. This attention of the mother to her son-in-law usually makes her unmarried sons and daughters jealous, as epitomized in the common saying referred to earlier. Under her mother's supervision and instructions, the bride comes to learn the appropriate conduct of womanhood. It is probably during this period that she receives sex information as the occasion arises. Moreover, her previous playmates do not sever their contacts with her; they still go to see her and 'have a hand dip of henna' with her; but she is not allowed to join their games or play with 'toys'. Other women, especially relatives, come to see her, give her advice and praise her 'halo' and jewellery. On the whole it seems that the girl comes under her mother's authority at this stage more than any other stage of her development. During this period of seclusion the direct influence of the mother is undoubtedly supreme, even much more than the husband. The latter, in fact, is not expected to linger in his bride's house. Except for his mealtimes, he should not remain in the house except when he comes in late at night after finishing his entertainments with his friends. 585 593 [606]

Indeed, the first year of marriage, for both the husband and wife, bristles with difficulties that may lead to divorce. According to my informant, Mahmoud, marriages are more prone to break down during the first year than at any later period. This statement seems plausible, since during the first year especially, the economic, social and psychological adjustments or maladjustments not only between the spouses, but also between their families, develop.[2] The amount of talk, gossip and vitupera- 586 593

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. II, Helsingfors, 1935, p. 72.

[2] For a well-documented discussion on the economic, social and psychological factors curbing the Moslem's nominal freedom of divorce, see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. According to official statistics the ratio of divorce per thousand of the population of Egypt for the five years between 1942 and 1946 was 8·3, 9·2, 9·6, 8·9, 8·1 respectively. *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 47 (in Arabic).

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586 tion, especially amongst the womenfolk, might appear tragi-comic when they harp endlessly upon the shortcomings of the spouses, and their 593 respective families. Complaints and gossip are heard about things such as the inability to provide the right amount of henna for the bride; or the bride's family's bad cooking of the groom's pigeons; the quality of the girl's jewellery and endless small things which reveal the difficulties of the adjustments of the individual family to an equally important wider circle of the joint family.

586 The following table shows that the percentages of divorce for the whole country reach their highest during the first two years of marriage.

TABLE IV

Relation between divorce and the duration of marriage between 1942 and 1946 in Egypt

Duration of marriage	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
Less than a month	4·20	4·31	4·46	3·88	3·99
One–six months	14·60	15·70	16·30	14·50	14·20
Six months–one year	12·50	13·10	14·40	14·60	13·05
One–two years	18·4	18·10	20·90	20·30	20·30
Two–three years	11·0	11·90	13·60	14·50	13·70
Three–four years	7·55	9·05	8·34	7·82	8·60
Four–five years	5·80	4·87	5·04	5·53	5·40
Five–ten years	15·30	13·10	13·70	12·30	11·90
Ten–fifteen years	5·42	5·23	5·10	4·63	4·74
Fifteen–twenty years	2·42	2·40	2·32	2·12	2·00
Twenty years and more	2·78	2·66	2·38	2·09	2·12[1]

Here a short note on divorce seems necessary. The right and power to divorce one's wife is part of the male ethos in this community. According to Moslem law (Sharia) a man can divorce his wife twice and on both occasions can take her back. If he repeats any formula of divorce three times or says, 'You are divorced threefold' (talga bi attalati), then the divorce is final; and husband and wife can only remarry on certain conditions.[2] Recently, in Egypt, the threefold formula of divorce has come to be regarded as one statement, and husband and wife can reunite immediately after its utterance if they wish.

The word 'divorce' is also used as a conditional oath by men to convince others of the truth of a statement, or to force them to accept an offer or conform to a desire.[3]

[1] These percentages are worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 50 (in Arabic). [2] Cf. S. G. Fitzgerald, *Muhammadan Law*.
[3] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, pp. 297–8.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardasi', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

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159 in the Kuttab to improve his handwriting, as the maxim of the pious ancestors runs, 'good handwriting increases the clarity of truth'.

In the whole of Ali's life religion has meant much to him in terms of personal security. His need of recognition and for prestige is certainly satisfied by his knowledge of the Sacred Book and other sources of religious information. With his sensitive and shy nature he could not have integrated his personality except through this religious foundation. Moreover, Ali's subsistence resources have been secure so far as he is still dependent on his father and mother. At the end of every lunar month his older brother, Ahmad, carries Ali's family allowance of corn to the latter's house and no serious quarrel has occurred between him and his father or brother on these grounds. The harmony of relationship between Ali and his father's family could be also attributed to the fact that Ali still lives with his wife's people, who are about five hundred yards from his father's house, while his brother Ahmad lives in the father's household. Ali's father is about sixty-five years old, and is still a robust man, who works in the field, and is considered by his family as tight-fisted.

In contrast to his brother, Ali cares much more for his clothes and appearance in general, and this is one of the reasons his father sends him to deputize for him on various occasions. Moreover, while his brother has been a member of the 'Nakshabandi' mystic sect, Ali has never joined it, as his religious experience has been satisfied through his knowledge of the Koran and literacy, while his comparatively illiterate brother finds his satisfaction in the emotional ecstasy that is invoked by the repetitive rhythm of the mystic circle (zikr). Ali probably had not joined the mystic [593] order because his brother was already a member, and normally brothers are not found together in the Order. On asking Sheikh Hussein, who is the local head of the Order about this fact, I was told: 'Brothers do not come to the Order for the fear of the evil eye. Jacob advised his seven sons never to enter from the same door or follow each other; they should enter from different doors and always spread themselves.' Structurally, this is in harmony with the cultural values of hierarchy, order, and respect relations between brothers, as physical proximity between them in sitting or eating in public is not considered polite.

MAHMOUD

Mahmoud is illiterate, suspicious, and a proud man, so I had compiled his life history by asking him questions that would not arouse any scruples in his mind. He does not know when he was born, he remembers only that he just managed to escape the days of forced military conscription during the First World War, being two or three years younger than the eligible age.[1] This means that he is about fifty years old. My relation to

[1] These days are known in the villagers' language as 'assultah al askaria', when people [902] from the village were conscripted to work on the military roads or as camp sentinels in Palestine during the First World War.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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511
[041]

APPENDIX III

The summer crop is only of one kind, millet.[1]

Product	*Price per unit in £E*	*Total*
6 ardabs ..	3.50	£E 21

With every feddan a farmer can own the following animals:

1. A cow, which every two years would bring a calf worth £E6 income per year 3
2. A camel, which every three years would bring a camel worth £E6 per year 2
3. Five sheep, each bringing two lambs a year worth 30 piastres 3

Total income £E8

Thus the total income from cultivating an acre and the profits derived from animals per year amounts to .. £E61
Subtract for taxes and sowing seeds .. 1.50

Net income £E59.50

And as the *per capita* property of land is about one-third of an acre, then the *per capita* income from agriculture is about £E20. Moreover, according to the Postmaster, the village received (during the period of my field work) between £E400 and £E600 per month from those relatives who work in town, which, distributed per head, would make the total income per head £E21 per year.

511

On the other hand, it was more difficult to assess the *per capita* consumption of food and goods. The difficulty is obvious in a community which is self-sufficing in many ways, and which keeps no written records of its budgets. Expenditure, however, does not vary considerably from person to person in the village, and the following estimate will give an approximate picture.

[593]

The consumption of bread has been estimated on the surest criterion which is the amount of crop that a father allows his son in his marital residence to take to his wife and children.

Winter Harvest

Two-thirds ardab of wheat for the husband
One-half ardab of wheat for the wife
One-quarter ardab of wheat for the child under seven
One-half ardab of barley for the husband
One-half ardab of barley for the wife (and chicken)
One-quarter ardab of barley for the child
One-twelfth ardab of beans per person

[262]
[231]

[1] Dates are not included here as they are usually consumed daily by the family. Berseem is not also included in winter crop, being consumed by animals.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for
[595] it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 597 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is 114 10

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791 with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789 tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755 of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753 by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123 and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593 one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152 evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776 him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152 come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158 mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756 they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755 of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [60]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

social and religious traditions, and in fear and natural respect rather than in any deep affection. 593

Yet the love of the son for his mother, even when he is grown up and married, is the most noticeable attachment in the fellah family. If he has been lacking in respect for her, the whole village is shocked. 'Paradise lies under your mother's feet.' She is mistress of his household, till her dying day. She is even named after her son, as *Umm 'Aly*, the Mother of 'Aly. 593 577

This relationship is the most solid bond in the family, the more so as ancestry counts for little. The peasant family has no forefathers, no family name, no individuality and no independence. In this it is very different from the Chinese family, to which ancestor-worship and the honour of the family name are very important. 593

Here the family group shades off into a wider community more or less closely interrelated by blood and marriage, the family in the social sense. Under the authority of its head this enlarged family attends funerals and weddings, carries on feuds, and is ready to avenge the honour of any one of its members. This solidarity is only of the present, for after three generations it is no longer recognisable. So, just as the house is not a complete unit by itself, neither is the family which lives in it. As there is no real 'home', because there is no home life, so there is no real 'family', because there is no family life. 593 602

The family is a group for working the soil, into which children are born as additional helpers. Its union with the soil is made doubly sure by a tangle of traditions regulating life in the home. 593

38.

×539
466

El-ʿafu, ya bē, yafendina,
win kunna ʿibna terabbīna;
win kunna uladak teraḍḍīna!
Ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

I beg your pardon, O Bey, our master!
If we have done something badly, then reprove us;
And if we have been thy sons, then content us!
The sun will scarcely guide us (home).

[554] [576] 1. By using very high titles in addressing their masters the peasants often curry favor. Many of our people addressed us as "Bey" and it often happened that some poor devil, asking in fear and trembling for something, would proceed in one breath to the superlative thus: "ya bē, ya bāša, ya brinz": "bey, pasha, prince".

[593] 2. That is to say: "thy good sons". For the Egyptian, the adjective is superfluous, as sons usually behave very respectfully toward their father. Even sons who are but fairly well brought up, will not, in the presence of their father, either be seated, eat or smoke, without special command to do so.

2. 3. Another said: rabbīna, raḍḍīna.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

127.

Disobedient.

539x
521
593

A young wife, against the express command of her husband — very pretty women are kept at home — has gone again at daybreak, to the river, to chat with her former companions, who have come to draw water (see No. 78). Meanwhile sunrise draws nearer and she urges the return home, in order that her husband may not discover her absence.

Ya banāt imlu u-šīlu,
la-n-nahār yiṭla' 'alēye.
Ḫēfe min maḥbūbi yilā'ini,
Sīdi u-mḥarrag 'alēye.

O girls, fill and carry away,
That the day may not surprise me.
I fear, that my beloved may meet me.
He is my master and has forbidden me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

129.

A Matrimonial Tiff.

539x
593

The husband has brought some meat for his wife, but has been much delayed. As an excuse, he tells her of the crowd at the railway station. "Say what you please. I have now neither time nor mind to cook", is the answer which he receives.

Gāb-li-l-laḥme
wel-wabūr zaḥme.
Yabn-el-ʾaḥbe
maṭbuḫšē ana.

He brought me the meat
And at the railway station there was a great crowd.
Thou son of a harlot,
I will not cook!

3. We have a like friendly address in No. 131.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

×539
832
152

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnêye mis-sahar dablāne.
Ṣanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Ḫāṣimt ummi wabūye ʿala šāno.
5 *Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.*

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
[593] I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
5 Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x
166
464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8). [593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

Ya ma 'ultē-lak, ya ma 'ultē-lak 593
winte lissa fi-'angetak?: 539x
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye, 464
hissak terūḥ eš-šar'īye,
5 *yaḥdūk bilād el-ṛarbīye,*
tiṣbaḥ 'adīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak 'ala-l-mu'dāf rāiḥ
teṭalla' er-raml es-sāiḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess, [186]
Beware of going to the Shar'īye,

×539 5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
● 593 And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
464 So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the
[501] better known daḥabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west,
[103] are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzīq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has
[114] been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The
832 inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without
[824] a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamāẓni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

133.

A Young Wife and an Old Husband.

539x
593

Tiddūni liš-šaib lē?
Ya-ḫsāret šabābi fī!
Eš-šaib yešabšabni
we-ʿaṣāto telehlebni.
5 *Saʿat ma-nḫušš el-ʾāʿa,*
yibʾa-l-ṛamm meḥauwiṭni.

Why do you give me to the gray-head?
It is a pity to waste my youth on him!
The old man will make me ill,
And his cane will torment me.
5 When we enter the hall,
Grief will constantly surround me!

2. One must think of superstitious usages which are supposed to incline the young wife's love toward the old man. (Vollers.)

5. The principal room of the house. See No. 98, note [342] on l. 2.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essuk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

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595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

● 593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, [264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the 888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

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It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

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FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah"—the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [992] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1] 626

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible. [594] [554] [156] [581]

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3] 121

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the 556 [961]

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertilizer he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him. [577]

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 53.

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

594 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

the cultivator's 'capital', and constitute the normal rural unit. 594

The head of the family works full-time on the land. His wife lends a hand at seed-time and harvest, rears poultry at home and makes butter and cheese for sale. His children look after the animals, take them to the fields or to water, gather the dung, watch the *saqia* and collect manure. For five or six weeks a year they work for wages at cotton-picking, or fighting the cotton worm, or in the ginning factory. The *gamoossa* draws the plough, turns the *saqia*, treads out the corn, and produces manure (mud soaked in urine), fuel (dung and straw), and milk. The donkey transports manure, crops, and the fellah himself. 594 231 241 461

Such a rural unit is sufficient, without any outside help to cultivate five feddans.

Apart from his daily bread, or subsistence wage in the strictest sense, his year's work brings the fellah in at the most about L.E. 10 in cash. But his assistants are also consumers, and this money, which would otherwise be clear profit, has to be spent on such necessities as the following (pre-war prices are given): 511 434

	P.T.
Oil for the kitchen, extra vegetables, occasional meat, sugar, tea	200
Oil or petroleum for the lamp, renewal of household articles such as plates or water-pots or apparatus such as baskets, summer forage for *gamoossa* and donkey	100
A new garment (dress or *gallabiya*) for each member of the family at time of feast	150
Expenses in time of sickness or rejoicing, or for superstitious practices, pilgrimage, or fines ..	50
Unforeseen expenses	500

In the last section, which alone presents any possibility of saving, come expenses such as those for circumcisions, funerals, marriages, or dowries, or sums paid for exemption from military service. There is always one or more of these to pay for, and often enough the budget shows a deficit.

In estimating the income L.E. 10 was given as a maximum. For these expenses L.E. 10 is a minimum. That is

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers. The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are [586] socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often [136] than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, 593 whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction [598] between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315-16.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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with ease in the same gathering with their maternal uncles, but not with their paternal uncles. The relations between paternal and maternal cousins fall in the same line with that of the father's or mother's side.

One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family

[1] E. L. Peters in his review of Hilma Granqvist, 'Child Problems among the Arabs' in *Man*, Vol. LI, September 1951, p. 126.

[2] Raymond Firth in his review of M. Fortes, 'The Web of Kinship' in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, April, 1951, p. 159.

[3] For kinship terms in Silwa, see Appendix IV, 'A Note on Kinship Terms'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 [593] A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the [604]

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their *first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbeuz). In such cases, a reli-*gious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

562 places his family would at once lose their position, and they would
565 be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such
521 restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is
577 not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and
181 dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control,
562 and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything
152 but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in sub-
562 jection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain
593 a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

583 More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for
593 example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and
578 remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or
[406] more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land
586 and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his
428 village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent
581 woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment; also, monogamy
[595] is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her husband many male children, he will not take another wife.
● 595 The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors and old maids hardly [848] [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery committed by a woman was punished with drowning down to a [684] short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and 595
all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an additional wife because his first one has not presented him [842]
with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility. And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when 586
the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change of wares, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time. This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if [554]
he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuccessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female 567
slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The 586
father must always maintain the children that any divorced wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore, forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this and other reasons it is very common among the higher [595]
classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the *rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single* wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to these matters, since the state does not concern itself about matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesiastical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some weak attempts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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great many cases the separation is only temporary, the husband and wife make up their quarrel and come together again without any farther formalities than the consent of the kadi. When the severest form of divorce has been pronounced, however, namely, with the formula of threefold repudiation, a reunion becomes not such an easy matter. For such cases there exists the well known and peculiar law of the *mostahill* (literally "permission-maker"). A third person has formally to marry the divorced woman and put her away again, whereupon the husband can again take back his former wife. Men who are endowed with the minimum of personal advantages are usually selected to act as these middle men, and they are paid for their welcome services. Cases of this sort are certainly rare, being considered disgraceful. It sometimes happens also that the pair joined in this momentary marriage take each other's fancy, the intermediary will not give up the woman joined to him, and no power can tear them asunder if they do not wish it. The law just mentioned is said to be founded on the awakening of jealousy. 586 587

The man of the middle and lower ranks who has more than one wife usually has his harem, with children and attendants, in different houses, or in different portions of the same house specially constructed for the purpose; and in order to give satisfaction to all parties, a good polygamous husband eats and sleeps in regular alternation, the one day in the house of one wife, the next in that of another. These look upon themselves as relatives, and from time to time pay each other at least ceremonial visits. Indeed there are a great many examples of several wives living together peacefully, obediently, and free from jealousy. Of quarrels arising from jealousy much less is heard than one would have beforehand assumed. By his supreme powers the husband maintains order, and jealousy frequently takes even the form of a praiseworthy struggle how each wife may appear more amiable in the eyes of her husband than her rivals. Most women give up from the first the idea of requiring their husband to remain true to them, and jealous women are even laughed at by their female friends. The ideal romantic love 595 [831]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, [264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the 888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 or 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 52–3.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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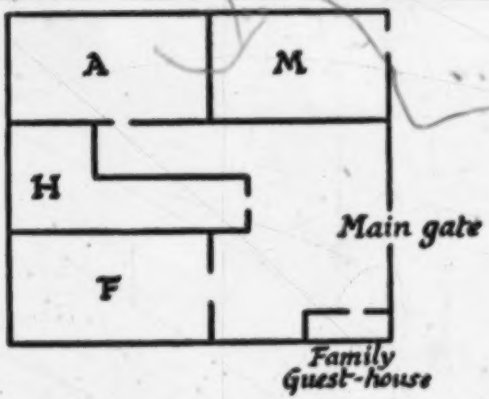
Silwa

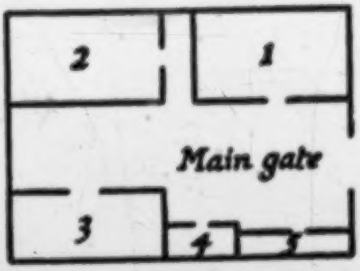
of their own as long as their father is alive, they have to live and work with him. Whether two married brothers with their families form one family living in one household, depends on whether they work co-operatively on the land after their father's death or whether they divide it. The family as an economic unit is identified with its common entrance to the house. This entrance must be distinguished from many houses which have a single main gate behind which there are other entrances. The main gate could be identified with the extended family whose members no longer form an economic unit.

The following sketch illustrates a typical example of a compound of an extended family.



X, the father of A, M and F and the grandfather of H, was the owner of this house site. After his death the two brothers M and A, their sister F and their nephew H wanted to divide their inheritance. During their prolonged quarrel over the land, they divided the house amongst them. As M was so annoyed with his brother A he decided not to enter the house from the same door A used, and built a separate entrance for himself. A, H and F, although constituting separate economic family units, still share the same main entrance and the compound is referred to as X's house.

The following household forms one economic unit in spite of the different members composing it.



1 represents the part of the head of the family with his unmarried children; 2 represents his mother and his widowed sister who have both transferred their land to the head of the family; 3 represents his half-sister, who is also a widow and has a young

1:'Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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592 daughter; 4 his son and wife; 5 place reserved for animals. In this case, the half-sister has not transferred her share of land to her brother but rents it to him.

596 There is no institutionalized economic co-operation between the members of an extended family, if they are not living in one house. If they are on good terms, economic mututal assistance in borrowing money, animals, or crops may take place. Indeed it is significant that the extended family is not resorted to as much for economic help as has been expected. The economic strength of the extended family and the harmonious relationships between its members are not what is usually assumed by writers on social affairs in Egypt.[1]

However, the unity of the extended family is expected in questions related to public and formal occasions. The extended family is publicly responsible for the general conduct and certain disciplinary measures to redress the offences of its members against law and order, as we shall see later. Members of the extended family are also expected to render support to each other on occasions of offering hospitality, at circumcision, wedding [613] or funeral ceremonies. On the whole, the extended family could be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal economic family and the clan, shouldering the social responsibility for the smaller units and held accountable for their behaviour before the clan. It is only on the social level of public issues that public opinion in the village considers the family as a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses.[2]

613 The extended families merge into the clan, and the village is composed
616 of nine clans (kabail), each tracing its descent in the patrilineal line to one common ancestor. Further, the nine clans are grouped in two main sections (hissa), each section belonging to a common progenitor, the two progenitors being brothers. One section is called 'Onab related to 'On, the brother of Mousa who is the progenitor of the Musiab section. The 'Onab section is divided into five clans, named: Diabab, Hasaballab, M'alliab, Waznab and Gharamab, whilst the Musiab is divided into four clans called: Marazik, 'Atamni, 'Amrab and Brahimab.[3]

616 It is locally accepted that each section represents half the population of the village, with the majority of the Musiab having their residence in the northern part, while the majority of the 'Onab reside mainly in the southern part. Between the two sections there is complete freedom of intermarriage

[1] The writer is under the impression, from his general observation, that the extended family seems to be stronger and more effective as an economic unit amongst big landowning families as distinct from what obtains in Silwa, a community of small landowners.

[2] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[3] Ab, the termination of the names of these clans, according to C. G. Seligman and Brenda Seligman, cannot be the Arabic ab—father. The suffix is common among the Beja tribal names. 'The Kababish, a Sudan Arab Tribe', *Harvard African Studies*, Vol. II, 1918, footnote, p. 115.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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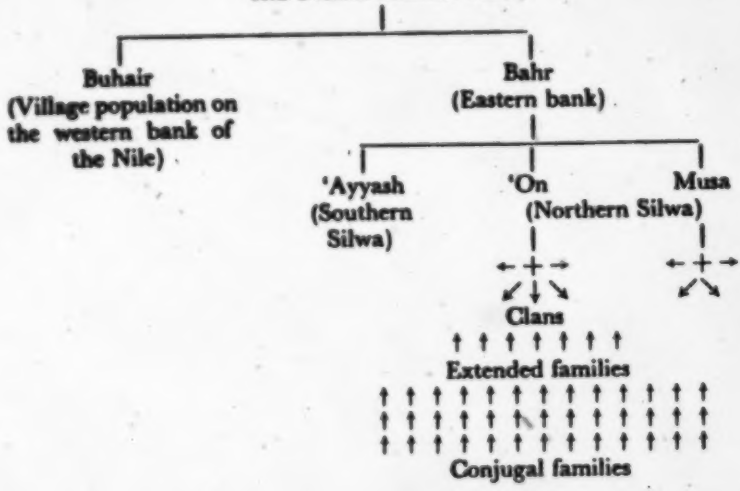
THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The genealogical pattern, based on the patrilineal descent, repeats itself
621 with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the
619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

THE G'AFRA DESCENT TREE



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the
186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having
613 a name for hospitality, or for scholarship and piety. Pride of clan is linked
616 with activities in the guest house, or co-operation in digging a well. Pride
186 in one's section is revealed on communal celebrations especially during the celebration of the Prophet's birthday; each section proclaiming that it has carried it out in a more spectacular manner as each usually has its 'marquee' for listening to the recital of Koran and mawals (popular songs). At
619 the level of the G'afra as such, the sense of pride reveals itself in their holy
186

[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardised details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 85.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[831] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
588 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional
165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[582] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [557] ●

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [524] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Siwa

ground pretending to be dead. The fisherman picked the fox up and put it in his basket on top of the fish. Surreptitiously the fox began to eat the fish, and after he had gobbled them all up, jumped out of the basket and mocked the fisherman, saying, 'I have triumphed over you' (literally, I have seared you). 'You will never be able to use my skin either in winter or in summer, while I have eaten up all your fish.'

857* 539

VIII

There was a man who had first a daughter and then a son. After the death of their mother their father married again. Their stepmother[1] hated them even more because she herself had not borne any children, and she used to make them work very hard for her.

One day she gave her stepchildren two baskets of equal size to fill with fuel (animal dung, bits of straw and wood found along the roads). She promised a loaf of wheat bread and an egg to the one who filled the basket first. The brother did not gather much fuel, and for most of the time he was taking fuel out of his sister's basket, and putting it into his own basket. In this way he filled his basket first, and returned home, asking his stepmother for the promised reward. The stepmother told him to wait until she grilled the egg in her neighbour's oven, and asked him to go to sleep in the meanwhile. On her return the boy was sleeping, whereupon she slew him with a sharp knife, put him in a pot, and proceeded to cook him as if he had been a goose.

When the sister returned, she enquired about her brother, and the stepmother replied that she had sent him on an errand to his maternal aunt. She asked her to go on heating the pot with the fuel, asking her not to take the lid off the pot. But while the stepmother went out to bake the bread in the neighbour's oven, the girl lifted the lid and saw her brother's finger: she was grieved and started to cry. When the stepmother returned she asked her why she was crying, and whether she had lifted the lid. The girl answered that she was not crying, but that her tears were caused by the smoke, as she had to blow the fire constantly for the fuel was not dry enough.

In the evening the father came home and the wife offered him his meal which consisted of his son's flesh. On enquiring why his daughter was crying, the stepmother told him that she refused her dinner, and that she could not find any reason for her grief. When the bones were thrown away, the girl collected them all and put them in a jewel box which she hid under the water-jar from which the family drank. After a while, the child's ghost (sul) appeared, singing a beautiful tune: 'I am a green sparrow, who was killed by my stepmother, and whose flesh was eaten by my bloody father (aboya alars), and whose bones were collected by my affectionate sister.'

One day while the stepmother was grinding corn, the boy sang the

[1] The stepmother is always referred to descriptively as the wife of the father (literally, the father's woman: 'marat al-abu', cfm. Arabic, 'imrat al-ab').

[601]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Four

A NOTE ON KINSHIP TERMS

After discussing the village social structure from a general viewpoint it is worth while describing the kinship terms. Though Professor Fortes considers the kinship terminology as a superficial way of approaching the social structure, it is a necessary approach, for they are handy techniques by which people sort out their relations with one another, and are accordingly able to assume the structural behaviour or produce the preferred responses.

Kinship terms in Silwa, as well as in the province of Aswan, are those generally used in Arabian society. The following list is an enumeration of these terms:

Om (class. Um): mother.
Jid (class. Jad): paternal grandfather (in inheritance procedures only he is referred to as 'regular grandfather': gid sahih).
Jid: maternal grandfather (distinguished from the paternal grandfather in inheritance procedures by calling him 'irregular grandfather': gid fasid).
'Am: father's brother, paternal uncle.
'Ammah: father's sister, paternal aunt.
Khal: mother's brother, maternal uncle.
Khalah: mother's sister, maternal aunt.
Wad 'Am (class. Ibn Am): father's brother's son—paternal cousin.
Bit 'Am (class. Bint 'am): father's brother's daughter.
Wad 'Ammah: father's sister's son.
Bit 'Ammah: father's sister's daughter.
Wad Khal: mother's brother's son—maternal cousin.
Bit Khal: mother's brother's daughter.
Wad Khalah: mother's sister's son.
Bit Khalah: mother's sister's daughter.
Akh: brother.
Akht (class. Ukht): sister.
'Adeel: wife's sister's husband. The word, literally 'balancing' in Arabic, indicating the equivalent and symmetrical position of the two husbands in the family.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX IV

601 Silf: sister's husband.
Hama (class. hamu): father-in-law.
Hamah: mother-in-law.
Naseeb: general category for male in-laws, literally meaning related.
Nasibah: general category for female in-laws.

It is also interesting to note that there is a distinction made between true brothers from the same parents called 'Ashika', and brothers from the father only, referred to occasionally as 'sons of the father'. The uterine brother is also called brother, and in inheritance procedures he is referred to as 'the concealed brother'. In the classical Arabic the grandson from the daughter is called 'Sibt', while that from the son is called 'Hafeed'. These two terms are not used, however, in the village, the persons concerned being referred to as 'wad bitty' ('my daughter's son') and 'wad walady' ('my son's son'). It is also significant to note the distinction between the patrilineal descent and the matrilineal descent. Relatives from the former are referred to as from the ''Asaba', which literally means 'backbone', while the latter are referred to as from the 'lahma' which means 'flesh'.

Such precise and defined Arabian kinship terms have led anthropologists to include them in the 'descriptive systems'. Yet distant relatives related to the patrilineal side, and of the father', or grandfather's generation, could be called ''Am' (paternal uncle), and less commonly ''Ab' (father) or 'Gid' (grandfather), and those on the mother's side are 'Khal'. Sometimes for a more distant relative the villagers, as they put it, 'calculate the degree', and find out the relations by abbreviating or simplifying the genealogy, e.g. by considering cousins as brothers.

611 Though kindred is traced through both parents (bilateral), yet inheritance, and social groupings of the extended family, clan and section are based on the unilateral patrilineal principle of kinship.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [60]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahir. MR13
Silwa

difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

with ease in the same gathering with their maternal uncles, but not with 604
their paternal uncles. The relations between paternal and maternal cousins 605
fall in the same line with that of the father's or mother's side.

One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social 607 ●
structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige 611
are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded [595] as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family 600

[1] E. L. Peters in his review of Hilma Granqvist, 'Child Problems among the Arabs' in *Man*, Vol. LI, September 1951, p. 186.

[2] Raymond Firth in his review of M. Fortes, 'The Web of Kinship' in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, April, 1951, p. 159.

[3] For kinship terms in Silwa, see Appendix IV, 'A Note on Kinship Terms'.

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867 Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behaviour which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

602 Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and
602 pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and
539 people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no
[518] people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

> A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
> The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was re-
> [533] sponsible for paying the expenses of treatment.
> The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am without support.

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'.

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others.

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women.

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between

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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 574 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 [609] [576] The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope. [576]

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 578 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588-9.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye. 602 578 [154]

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repudiates' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation. 606 578 [582]

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action. 578 154 156

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success. 578 593 [587]

Another interesting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 593 A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the [604]

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

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potential friction in the new situation; and to the extent they are in harmony he can be secure in his new status. Many marriages actually break down because of the friction between parents, sisters or brothers, and wife or mother-in-law. This seems to be a common feature of patriarchal societies where the main emphasis is not on marriage as such, but on its wider social implications, being an institution relating two families and whose foundation is not 'romantic love' but having children.[1]

Such instances, and many others, show the delicacy of the relations in the kinship pattern. It is worth noticing that such delicacy is more on the paternal than the maternal side where the scope or the manifestations of tension are not so wide or numerous. Although such friction amongst kin is a valid element in their behaviour towards each other, it cannot obviate certain corporate structural symbols of social behaviour. If, for instance, a man is attacked or publicly insulted, his brother or cousin must stand with him in spite of whatever conflicts are hitherto outstanding. If an uncle dies, his cousins must attend the burial ceremony and 'passionately' mourn him. Gifts and money must be exchanged on occasions such as circumcision and wedding irrespective of the nature of personal relationship. Absence from the village is not an excuse for not performing one's obligations. Villagers in towns or cities have to mourn publicly their deceased in cafés or other places where others from Silwa, residing there, come to condole with them. On their return to the village they must perform the mourning rituals for close kin by weeping on their way from the station to the house, or if the deceased is a distant relative, by visiting his people, in spite of the lapse of time. On the whole, severing personal relationship for any reason does not necessarily mean ignoring one's corporate relationships by forfeiting any of the rights or shirking any of the duties.

Cutting across these bilateral kinship ties is a flow of inter-personal relationships which are not caught up in corporate bonds. This is what Professor Fortes designates as ties of 'cognatic kinship'. Cognatic ties are in contradistinction to agnatic ties, which primarily stress the corporate duties and rights and the solidarity of the social groupings, at the expense of the individual's private interests. Cognatic ties both within and across the kinship system differ from the agnatic in one important respect. In Fortes' words: 'They are ties of amity and mutual interest between individuals. Private rights and duties and personal loyalties prevail as against corporate rights. They represent the recognition that the direct social bonds of individual with individual are as vital for the wellbeing of the society as the fixed framework of corporate groupings. This sense of interdependence of men as individuals in the hard struggle of ordinary living, not only transcends the more rigid solidarities of the family, lineage . .

[1] See Talcott Parsons, 'The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

844 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and
431 advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
602 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immediately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

602 Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said "No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

"*Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ*" ("Better, much better"), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi!*" ("O my brother, my brother!").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 88 f. that it is to her mother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

social and religious traditions, and in fear and natural respect rather than in any deep affection. 593

Yet the love of the son for his mother, even when he is grown up and married, is the most noticeable attachment in the fellah family. If he has been lacking in respect for her, the whole village is shocked. 'Paradise lies under your mother's feet.' She is mistress of his household, till her dying day. She is even named after her son, as *Umm 'Aly*, the Mother of 'Aly. 593 577

This relationship is the most solid bond in the family, the more so as ancestry counts for little. The peasant family has no forefathers, no family name, no individuality and no independence. In this it is very different from the Chinese family, to which ancestor-worship and the honour of the family name are very important. 593

Here the family group shades off into a wider community more or less closely interrelated by blood and marriage, the family in the social sense. Under the authority of its head this enlarged family attends funerals and weddings, carries on feuds, and is ready to avenge the honour of any one of its members. This solidarity is only of the present, for after three generations it is no longer recognisable. So, just as the house is not a complete unit by itself, neither is the family which lives in it. As there is no real 'home', because there is no home life, so there is no real 'family', because there is no family life. 593 602

The family is a group for working the soil, into which children are born as additional helpers. Its union with the soil is made doubly sure by a tangle of traditions regulating life in the home. 593

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S KARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [603] [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [601] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [504] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers.

The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are [586] socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often [136] than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, 593 whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction [518] between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

●604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315–16.

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with ease in the same gathering with their maternal uncles, but not with 604
their paternal uncles. The relations between paternal and maternal cousins 605
fall in the same line with that of the father's or mother's side.

One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social 607
structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige 611
are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded [595] as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family 607

[1] E. L. Peters in his review of Hilma Granqvist, 'Child Problems among the Arabs' in *Man*, Vol. LI, September 1951, p. 126.

[2] Raymond Firth in his review of M. Fortes, 'The Web of Kinship' in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, April, 1951, p. 159.

[3] For kinship terms in Silwa, see Appendix IV, 'A Note on Kinship Terms'.

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578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 [593] A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the [604] conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

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One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family

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potential friction in the new situation; and to the extent they are in harmony he can be secure in his new status. Many marriages actually break down because of the friction between parents, sisters or brothers, and wife or mother-in-law. This seems to be a common feature of patriarchal societies where the main emphasis is not on marriage as such, but on its wider social implications, being an institution relating two families and whose foundation is not 'romantic love' but having children.[1]

Such instances, and many others, show the delicacy of the relations in the kinship pattern. It is worth noticing that such delicacy is more on the paternal than the maternal side where the scope or the manifestations of tension are not so wide or numerous. Although such friction amongst kin is a valid element in their behaviour towards each other, it cannot obviate certain corporate structural symbols of social behaviour. If, for instance, a man is attacked or publicly insulted, his brother or cousin must stand with him in spite of whatever conflicts are hitherto outstanding. If an uncle dies, his cousins must attend the burial ceremony and 'passionately' mourn him. Gifts and money must be exchanged on occasions such as circumcision and wedding irrespective of the nature of personal relationship. Absence from the village is not an excuse for not performing one's obligations. Villagers in towns or cities have to mourn publicly their deceased in cafés or other places where others from Silwa, residing there, come to condole with them. On their return to the village they must perform the mourning rituals for close kin by weeping on their way from the station to the house, or if the deceased is a distant relative, by visiting his people, in spite of the lapse of time. On the whole, severing personal relationship for any reason does not necessarily mean ignoring one's corporate relationships by forfeiting any of the rights or shirking any of the duties.

Cutting across these bilateral kinship ties is a flow of inter-personal relationships which are not caught up in corporate bonds. This is what Professor Fortes designates as ties of 'cognatic kinship'. Cognatic ties are in contradistinction to agnatic ties, which primarily stress the corporate duties and rights and the solidarity of the social groupings, at the expense of the individual's private interests. Cognatic ties both within and across the kinship system differ from the agnatic in one important respect. In Fortes' words: 'They are ties of amity and mutual interest between individuals. Private rights and duties and personal loyalties prevail as against corporate rights. They represent the recognition that the direct social bonds of individual with individual are as vital for the wellbeing of the society as the fixed framework of corporate groupings. This sense of interdependence of men as individuals in the hard struggle of ordinary living, not only transcends the more rigid solidarities of the family, lineage . . .

[1] See Talcott Parsons, 'The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

[582] [605] 1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnē 'ammi = "cousin" (masc.) and bintē 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. a.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

[461] [857] [681] 9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye. 602 578 [154]

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation. 606 578 [580]

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action. 578 154 156

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success. 578 593 [587]

Another intereting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

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585 606 might have been the relations between him and them before marriage, the newly created situation makes him no longer on familiar social terms with them. Traditionally, to remove this 'avoidance' the bridegroom's family should send within the first two months of marriage a ram to the bride's family as a 'reconciliation'.[1]

This avoidance could be regarded as a recognition that, in the initial stages of marriage, much of the behaviour of the married man to the family of his spouse has to be modified and reoriented. Even if he is married to his cousin, avoidance of her parents is required as a token of respect. Adoption of new phrases in reference to his in-laws, house habits of reserve, announcing his entrance into the house, manner of dress and similar items of etiquette must be observed by the newly married groom. In other words, previous informality and intimacy are replaced by a degree of formality to show consideration for the new ties of marriage.

This avoidance could also be considered as a manifestation that the [591] husband, living in his matrilocal residence, feels uneasy and embarrassed in the home of a comparatively alien family; his ultimate home will be his patrilineal house to which he eventually takes his wife.[2] This custom also implies the psychological stresses involved in the new situation, where it is difficult to render the demands of consanguinity and affinity compatible, and where the support of the larger family unit has to be sustained for the maintenance of the newly created bonds of the individual family.[3]

Nadel explains such an avoidance in a similar manner. He maintains that in such a situation spontaneous shame and conventionalized sexual shame appear combined; for these cultural features express (and prevent) both the embarrassment between strangers (in a kinship sense) who are thrown together by marriage, and the embarrassment that springs from the awareness of the sexual occasion responsible for this new relationship.[4]

Such social procedures are implicit cultural solutions for smoothing transition from one state of life to another requiring concomitant adjustment and reorganization.

[1] Although avoidance between bridegroom and parents-in-law is still strictly observed, the breaking away from it does not necessarily have to be achieved through a gift of a [108] 'slaughter', but occurs quite often nowadays through the exigencies of everyday life after the lapse of some time.

[2] This is the ideal course to be taken, but, as mentioned earlier, other factors, e.g. lack of space in his father's house, the bride's parents' attachment to their daughter and her children, might keep the husband in his matrilocal residence for years.

[3] This explanation is based on a similar situation referred to by R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 343. This avoidance lends itself to psycho-analytical interpretation in terms of incestuous taboo. The uneasiness in the newly created situation could also be inferred from the 'mock fight' which could be classified, according to Van Gennep, as one of the 'rites de separation', while exchange of gifts and the partaking of food would fall in the category of 'rites d'agrégation'. Cf. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, p. 198.

[4] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 352. The psycho-analytical interpretation for such a taboo, according to Roheim, is that in this way an attempt is made to separate the wife from the mother, genitality from orality, and infantile dependency. *Psycho-analysis and Anthropology*, p. 425.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

In Artas, the Palestinian village studied by Granqvist, the uneasiness in this stage of adjustment presents itself in a different way. As marriage in Artas is in the patrilocal residence, the bride, before leaving her family, would make demands on the bridegroom's family and make sure that her family's wishes have been fulfilled, before she is placed on the camel going to her bridegroom's house.[1] 171

As for the bride, she now starts her seclusion in the house till she brings forth a child and is never allowed to go out and never seen by a married man, even her husband's father and her married brothers. Her main job is to attend to her husband, to receive him when he knocks at the door, and to serve food to him. One of the main difficulties of newly married girls is their adjustment to the new situation, where they must break away from their previous life and assume a responsible role. The difficulties, however, are smoothed out in the matrilocal marriage period, where the bride's mother is really the one who, behind the scenes, provides her son-in-law with his requirements. This attention of the mother to her son-in-law usually makes her unmarried sons and daughters jealous, as epitomized in the common saying referred to earlier. Under her mother's supervision and instructions, the bride comes to learn the appropriate conduct of womanhood. It is probably during this period that she receives sex information as the occasion arises. Moreover, her previous playmates do not sever their contacts with her; they still go to see her and 'have a hand dip of henna' with her; but she is not allowed to join their games or play with 'toys'. Other women, especially relatives, come to see her, give her advice and praise her 'halo' and jewellery. On the whole it seems that the girl comes under her mother's authority at this stage more than any other stage of her development. During this period of seclusion the direct influence of the mother is undoubtedly supreme, even much more than the husband. The latter, in fact, is not expected to linger in his bride's house. Except for his mealtimes, he should not remain in the house except when he comes in late at night after finishing his entertainments with his friends. 585 593 [606]

Indeed, the first year of marriage, for both the husband and wife, bristles with difficulties that may lead to divorce. According to my informant, Mahmoud, marriages are more prone to break down during the first year than at any later period. This statement seems plausible, since during the first year especially, the economic, social and psychological adjustments or maladjustments not only between the spouses, but also between their families, develop.[2] The amount of talk, gossip and vitupera- 586 593

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, Vol. II, Helsingfors, 1935, p. 72.

[2] For a well-documented discussion on the economic, social and psychological factors curbing the Moslem's nominal freedom of divorce, see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, Chapter X. According to official statistics the ratio of divorce per thousand of the population of Egypt for the five years between 1942 and 1946 was 8·3, 9·2, 9·6, 8·9, 8·1 respectively. *Pocket Census of 1948*, Govt. Press, Cairo, 1950, p. 47 (in Arabic).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may 684
likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together.

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than 577
others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively 181
pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and 683
less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin.

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. 181
Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of 597
ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised.

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honour- 562
able position in the family. A man's love and respect for his 593
mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and [554]
respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has [606]
no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who has always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change."

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in 114
many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the 10
darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwil*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

2: Blackman E 5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede 586
for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved 428
to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained 581
his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

[141] [142]

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

152 593

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife! [607]

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

I: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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potential friction in the new situation; and to the extent they are in harmony he can be secure in his new status. Many marriages actually break down because of the friction between parents, sisters or brothers, and wife or mother-in-law. This seems to be a common feature of patriarchal societies where the main emphasis is not on marriage as such, but on its wider social implications, being an institution relating two families and whose foundation is not 'romantic love' but having children.[1]

Such instances, and many others, show the delicacy of the relations in the kinship pattern. It is worth noticing that such delicacy is more on the paternal than the maternal side where the scope or the manifestations of tension are not so wide or numerous. Although such friction amongst kin is a valid element in their behaviour towards each other, it cannot obviate certain corporate structural symbols of social behaviour. If, for instance, a man is attacked or publicly insulted, his brother or cousin must stand with him in spite of whatever conflicts are hitherto outstanding. If an uncle dies, his cousins must attend the burial ceremony and 'passionately' mourn him. Gifts and money must be exchanged on occasions such as circumcision and wedding irrespective of the nature of personal relationship. Absence from the village is not an excuse for not performing one's obligations. Villagers in towns or cities have to mourn publicly their deceased in cafés or other places where others from Silwa, residing there, come to condole with them. On their return to the village they must perform the mourning rituals for close kin by weeping on their way from the station to the house, or if the deceased is a distant relative, by visiting his people, in spite of the lapse of time. On the whole, severing personal relationship for any reason does not necessarily mean ignoring one's corporate relationships by forfeiting any of the rights or shirking any of the duties.

Cutting across these bilateral kinship ties is a flow of inter-personal relationships which are not caught up in corporate bonds. This is what Professor Fortes designates as ties of 'cognatic kinship'. Cognatic ties are in contradistinction to agnatic ties, which primarily stress the corporate duties and rights and the solidarity of the social groupings, at the expense of the individual's private interests. Cognatic ties both within and across the kinship system differ from the agnatic in one important respect. In Fortes' words: 'They are ties of amity and mutual interest between individuals. Private rights and duties and personal loyalties prevail as against corporate rights. They represent the recognition that the direct social bonds of individual with individual are as vital for the wellbeing of the society as the fixed framework of corporate groupings. This sense of interdependence of men as individuals in the hard struggle of ordinary living, not only transcends the more rigid solidarities of the family, lineage . . .

[1] See Talcott Parsons, 'The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLV, 1943.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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but also counteracts the friction and disturbances that constantly spring up in the relations of individuals with one another.'[1]

The adoption of Fortes' distinction and its implication is not arbitrary in this context, as it coincides almost completely with the two categories of relationship in the village. The agnatic kinship ties correspond to the 'Karaib' category while cognate kinship ties correspond to the 'Habaib' category. As one co-operates, for example, with relatives, one also selects a distantly related person or group, calling them 'Habaib', to co-operate with, and in this case a kinship term might be given to him or them as 'cousins'. The two categories are clearly distinguished in the sphere of mutual obligations, for in the case of cognatic ties, misunderstanding and friction would stop that form of social duties between the two sides.

[1] M. Fortes, *The Web of Kinship*, pp. 343–4.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shopkeepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 609 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

[323] The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[939] [1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1946.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

463 An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, 258 and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, [609] the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five [499] years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

463 Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. [286] The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the [299] village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also [291] used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

463 From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such 178 as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by [609] outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another [499] villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, [512] milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 574 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 [609] [576] [576] The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope.

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 578 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588–9.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace. They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

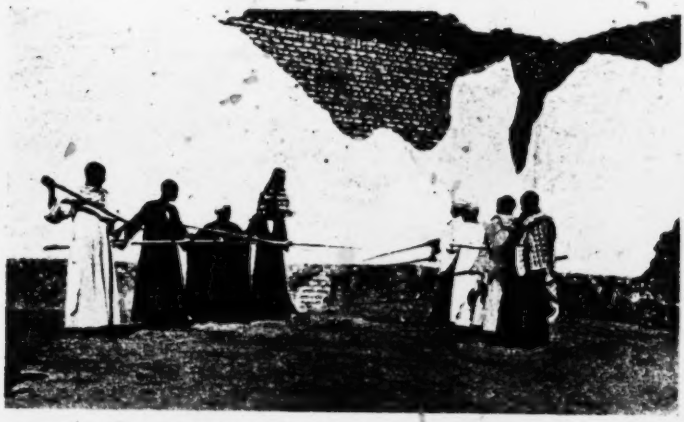

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (44).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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47.

Sympathy.

×599 35 [537] In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarîm (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri māl ʿal-fasʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḥaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwāti,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

[461] "The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
● [609] [673] The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare [801] the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmûds.

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593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that [611] they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, immature children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of [586] seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or [855] maternal grandmother.

The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations [577] to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

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with ease in the same gathering with their maternal uncles, but not with their paternal uncles. The relations between paternal and maternal cousins fall in the same line with that of the father's or mother's side.

One of the most salient features that underlies the structural relationships is that although the fabric forming the ideological basis for the social structure is entirely patrilineal as far as descent, inheritance, and prestige are concerned, yet it is dyed in a sentimental and emotional colouring which is preponderantly matrilineal. Towards the close matrilineal kin, the relations are certainly not weaker than towards the close patrilineal kin; they are of a different kind. If the relation of the 'ego' towards the patrilineal side is one of apprehension and alertness, and businesslike, as it were, the relation to the affinal side is one of affection, ease and jesting. It is not unusual for a sister who asks her brother for help to address him as 'Son of my mother' as a means of enlisting his sympathy; or for a brother, on going to visit his sister, to say 'I am going to see "my mother's daughter" '. Some men, whose mothers are of forceful character or whose fathers were married to other wives, are publicly called by their first names followed by their mother's first names. A man or a woman relates himself or herself always to the mother in situations of charm-writing, of incantations to ward off the evil eye or in similar magic rituals. In invoking God's help, women relate the person for whom they are praying to his mother, as this is considered the most genuine and moving way of appealing to God. This could be regarded as further evidence for the emphasis on the matrilineal sentiment in the social structure. In the case of a man or a woman referred directly to his or her mother, this could also be regarded as a functionally convenient way of distinguishing between him or her and the paternal half-brothers or half-sisters. The reference to the matrilineal origin in a polygamous patrilineal society seems to be a device used to distinguish between agnates.[1] Moreover, what Firth has written about the role of the mother's brother in a segmentary system of patrilineal type, applies to Silwa community. In this village, the khal or khala, or the maternal side in general, provides certain compensatory social functions to those provided by the father and the paternal side. The former side provides, as Firth put it, 'a locus of attachment and refuge for the children of the women by contrast with the demands laid upon them by their father's group'. Again, the recognition of the mother's brother's group as one of special interest provides a channel for large-scale social communication and reciprocity between it and the father's group.[2] The same applies to the recognition of in-law relationship.[3]

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family

[1] E. L. Peters in his review of Hilma Granqvist, 'Child Problems among the Arabs' in *Man*, Vol. LI, September 1951, p. 126.

[2] Raymond Firth in his review of M. Fortes, 'The Web of Kinship' in *Africa*, Vol. XXI, April, 1951, p. 159.

[3] For kinship terms in Silwa, see Appendix IV, 'A Note on Kinship Terms'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX IV

601 Silf: sister's husband.
Hama (class. hamu): father-in-law.
Hamah: mother-in-law.
Naseeb: general category for male in-laws, literally meaning related.
Nasibah: general category for female in-laws.

It is also interesting to note that there is a distinction made between true brothers from the same parents called 'Ashika', and brothers from the father only, referred to occasionally as 'sons of the father'. The uterine brother is also called brother, and in inheritance procedures he is referred to as 'the concealed brother'. In the classical Arabic the grandson from the daughter is called 'Sibt', while that from the son is called 'Hafeed'. These two terms are not used, however, in the village, the persons concerned being referred to as 'wad bitty' ('my daughter's son') and 'wad walady' ('my son's son'). It is also significant to note the distinction between the patrilineal descent and the matrilineal descent. Relatives from the former are referred to as from the ' 'Asaba', which literally means 'backbone', while the latter are referred to as from the 'lahma' which means 'flesh'.

Such precise and defined Arabian kinship terms have led anthropologists to include them in the 'descriptive systems'. Yet distant relatives related to the patrilineal side, and of the father', or grandfather's generation, could be called ''Am' (paternal uncle), and less commonly ''Ab' (father) or 'Gid' (grandfather), and those on the mother's side are 'Khal'. Sometimes for a more distant relative the villagers, as they put it, 'calculate the degree', and find out the relations by abbreviating or simplifying the genealogy, e.g. by considering cousins as brothers.

611 Though kindred is traced through both parents (bilateral), yet inheritance, and social groupings of the extended family, clan and section are based on the unilateral patrilineal principle of kinship.

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592 daughter; 4 his son and wife; 5 place reserved for animals. In this case, the half-sister has not transferred her share of land to her brother but rents it to him.

596 There is no institutionalized economic co-operation between the members of an extended family, if they are not living in one house. If they are on good terms, economic mututal assistance in borrowing money, animals, or crops may take place. Indeed it is significant that the extended family is not resorted to as much for economic help as has been expected. The economic strength of the extended family and the harmonious relationships between its members are not what is usually assumed by writers on social affairs in Egypt.[1]

However, the unity of the extended family is expected in questions related to public and formal occasions. The extended family is publicly responsible for the general conduct and certain disciplinary measures to redress the offences of its members against law and order, as we shall see later. Members of the extended family are also expected to render support to each other on occasions of offering hospitality, at circumcision, wedding or funeral ceremonies. On the whole, the extended family could be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal economic family and the clan, shouldering the social responsibility for the smaller units and held accountable for their behaviour before the clan. It is only on the social level of public issues that public opinion in the village considers the family as a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses.[2]

[613]

613 The extended families merge into the clan, and the village is composed
616 of nine clans (kabail), each tracing its descent in the patrilineal line to one common ancestor. Further, the nine clans are grouped in two main sections (hissa), each section belonging to a common progenitor, the two progenitors being brothers. One section is called 'Onab related to 'On, the brother of Mousa who is the progenitor of the Musiab section. The 'Onab section is divided into five clans, named: Diabab, Hasaballab, M'alliab, Waznab and Gharamab, whilst the Musiab is divided into four clans called: Marazik, 'Atamni, 'Amrab and Brahimab.[3]

616 It is locally accepted that each section represents half the population of the village, with the majority of the Musiab having their residence in the northern part, while the majority of the 'Onab reside mainly in the southern part. Between the two sections there is complete freedom of intermarriage

[1] The writer is under the impression, from his general observation, that the extended family seems to be stronger and more effective as an economic unit amongst big landowning families as distinct from what obtains in Silwa, a community of small landowners.

[2] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[3] Ab, the termination of the names of these clans, according to C. G. Seligman and Brenda Seligman, cannot be the Arabic ab—father. The suffix is common among the Beja tribal names. 'The Kababish, a Sudan Arab Tribe', *Harvard African Studies*, Vol. II, 1918, footnote, p. 113.

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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 63 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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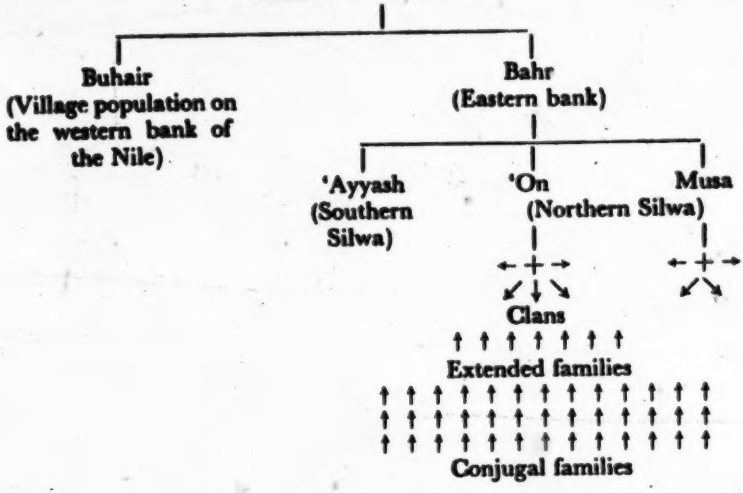
621 The genealogical pattern, based on the patrilateral descent, repeats itself with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the 619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

THE G'AFRA DESCENT TREE



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the 186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having 613 a name for hospitality, or for scholarship and piety. Pride of clan is linked 616 with activities in the guest house, or co-operation in digging a well. Pride in one's section is revealed on communal celebrations especially during the 186 celebration of the Prophet's birthday; each section proclaiming that it has carried it out in a more spectacular manner as each usually has its 'mar-619 quee' for listening to the recital of Koran and mawals (popular songs). At 186 the level of the G'afra as such, the sense of pride reveals itself in their holy

[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardised details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 23.

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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613 574 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, 613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is 682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call 627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be [779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is 156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com- 182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. 561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as [791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out- 561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the 888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship [576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, 560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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613 627 two joint families to 'level all the misunderstandings' between them. The dispute had arisen between the two joint families of 'Amareen and Karamsha, both belonging to the 'Amrab clan, Musiab section. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, the head of the first family, asked the Karamsha to lend him one of their camels to carry some maize straw from the field, but his request was refused because they alleged that they had no camels to spare as they were engaged in building a house. On another occasion, Hag Ahmad 'Imran insisted on taking the camel from one of the Karamsha while he was bringing water to be used in the building; people interfered and the matter was settled for the time being. After three days, he made another attempt and slapped the camel-driver, 'Othman, on the face, cursing his people. 'Othman, the offended man, could not retaliate as Hag Ahmad was the senior man of his family and older than he, and it is 'impolite' according to Arab traditions to slap such a man. People immediately gathered to settle this affair temporarily and prevent any further complications. Then Hag Ahmad's son came on the spot and started to insult 'Othman (who was his brother-in-law) and 'Othman, finding his equal, stood up to the challenge, but people intervened. The dispute, in spite of its temporary ending, had left 'something in the souls of the two houses'.

The 'residue in the souls' came up to the surface when the pilgrims from the clan came back from Mecca and had to be invited by the heads of the clan. The 'Amareen invited the Karamsha to co-operate, but the latter declined. In the meantime, it happened that a member of the Karamsha offered his help for the occasion but was refused by the 'Amareen. This added fuel to the fire and the situation between the two families became tense.

Deputations and mediators went between the two families to fix an 'Arab council' for arbitration. A respected and pious man suggested the family of Badawab for the purpose, but the Karamsha objected on the grounds that the former house was closely related to the 'Amareen. Then the arbitration was raised to the clan level and the Hasaballab clan from 'Onab section (to which neither side belonged) was suggested and this was accepted by both sides. On the appointed evening, the adult members of the two houses came to the Hasaballab guest house, where they were received and tea was served.

The meeting started by the Hasaballab head clansman reciting 'Wahhidouh ya Gamaa—Say that God is one, O gathering'. Everybody [188] present answered, 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet'. Then the chosen head of the Hasaballab asked the Karamsha, 'What is your story?' 'Abd-el-Gid, the head of the Karamsha, stated, 'We are claiming duties from the 'Amareen'. Then the head of the Hasaballab proposed that after sitting together in their guest house, the two sides should reconcile 'on the white and the reading of Fatiha', meaning that they should root out the past misunderstandings, and should forget all

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about them without going into any argument. The Karamsha, however, who were the accusers, opposed the suggestion and insisted on their case being heard, and consequently their rights being acknowledged. The argument was stated by the head of the Karamsha speaking and being interrupted by members of the disputing house here and there, as well as by members of his house. Then Hag Ahmad 'Imran began to defend his case, and then free argument took place. 613 627

One of the most effective devices in the Arab councils is the so-called 'mulakah' (a getting together), where on any dilemma in the course of argument, one or two persons from the mediators take one person or more from the disputing sides for a 'mulakah' to persuade him in a corner, or another room away from the general meeting, through personal and more intimate hearing to follow what the mediators proposed. Their usual form of pressure is to appeal to the person to 'consider the Arabs, or the people, or his kinsfolk'. The idea behind this device is to avoid any personal embarrassment or retreat in public, as this brings shame ('ar). If the retreat is accepted on a more intimate level, then the person has retreated owing to the pressure brought upon him because of personal ties or to his considerations to the 'Arabs', yet such a formulation of retreat is only implicit. [56]

However, the 'mulakah' which occurred three times during the meeting did not produce the required effects. The Hasaballab, the arbitrating clan, had then to go outside by themselves to agree on 'the rights of the Arabs which no one now should fear to declare'.

The formulation of the verdict is very interesting as an index of the functioning elements of the social structure. The Hasaballab declared two decisions; the first was that Hag Ahmad 'Imran committed a double wrong by slapping 'Othman the camel-driver, and by not preventing, even by slapping, his son from getting entangled with 'Othman. The second decision was that the clan of 'Amrab, to which the two disputing families belong, had committed a mistake by not mediating between the two families in due time.

As the disputants are morally compelled to accept the arbitration of whoever they agree upon to take this part, the 'Amareen had to shake hands with the Karamsha, followed by all present reading the Fatiha.

Yet this was not the end of everything in this Arab council. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, feeling that injustice had been done to him, immediately declared that he 'claimed rights from Hasaballab', meaning that he wanted to sue the arbitrating clan before another clan, a charge which they have to accept. The case now is between the 'Amareen and the Hasaballab, and they both agreed to appoint the 'Awadallab clan in the neighbouring village to take up the arbitration between them.[1] If the Hasaballab's verdict is considered unjust, they have to pay the 'Amareen

[1] If any clan or family is appealed to by both disputing parties for arbitration, it cannot refuse to act.

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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds. 627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and 627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large [554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing [628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of 627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields 692 or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho- 627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one [554] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined. By saying 'God compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 165.

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592 daughter; 4 his son and wife; 5 place reserved for animals. In this case, the half-sister has not transferred her share of land to her brother but rents it to him.

596 There is no institutionalized economic co-operation between the members of an extended family, if they are not living in one house. If they are on good terms, economic mututal assistance in borrowing money, animals, or crops may take place. Indeed it is significant that the extended family is not resorted to as much for economic help as has been expected. The economic strength of the extended family and the harmonious relationships between its members are not what is usually assumed by writers on social affairs in Egypt.[1]

However, the unity of the extended family is expected in questions related to public and formal occasions. The extended family is publicly responsible for the general conduct and certain disciplinary measures to redress the offences of its members against law and order, as we shall see later. Members of the extended family are also expected to render support to each other on occasions of offering hospitality, at circumcision, wedding [613] or funeral ceremonies. On the whole, the extended family could be regarded as an intermediate social unit between the conjugal economic family and the clan, shouldering the social responsibility for the smaller units and held accountable for their behaviour before the clan. It is only on the social level of public issues that public opinion in the village considers the family as a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses.[2]

613 The extended families merge into the clan, and the village is composed
616 of nine clans (kabail), each tracing its descent in the patrilineal line to one common ancestor. Further, the nine clans are grouped in two main sections (hissa), each section belonging to a common progenitor, the two progenitors being brothers. One section is called 'Onab related to 'On, the brother of Mousa who is the progenitor of the Musiab section. The 'Onab section is divided into five clans, named: Diabab, Hasaballab, M'alliab, Waznab and Gharamab, whilst the Musiab is divided into four clans called: Marazik, 'Atamni, 'Amrab and Brahimab.[3]

616 It is locally accepted that each section represents half the population of the village, with the majority of the Musiab having their residence in the northern part, while the majority of the 'Onab reside mainly in the southern part. Between the two sections there is complete freedom of intermarriage

[1] The writer is under the impression, from his general observation, that the extended family seems to be stronger and more effective as an economic unit amongst big landowning families as distinct from what obtains in Silwa, a community of small landowners.

[2] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[3] Ab, the termination of the names of these clans, according to C. G. Seligman and Brenda Seligman, cannot be the Arabic ab—father. The suffix is common among the Beja tribal names. 'The Kababish, a Sudan Arab Tribe', *Harvard African Studies*, Vol. II, 1918, footnote, p. 113.

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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 63 184 [829]

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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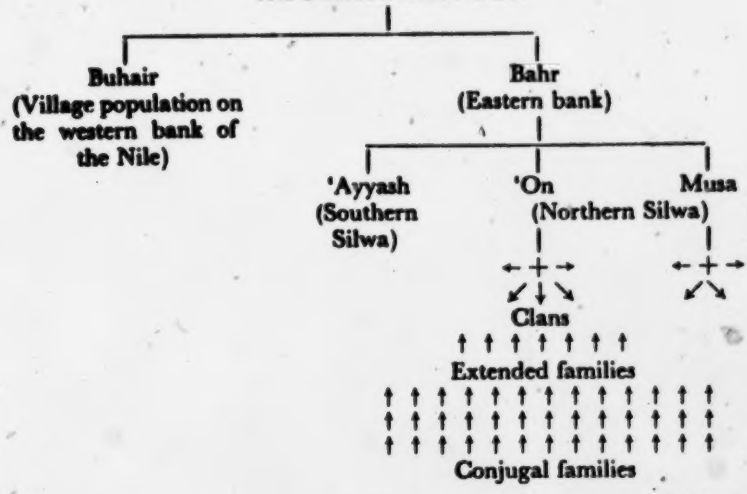
The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself
621 with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the
619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

THE G'AFRA DESCENT TREE



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the
186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having
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[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardised details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 23.

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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

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The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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621 The genealogical pattern, based on the 4gi (lateral descent), repeats itself with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the 619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]

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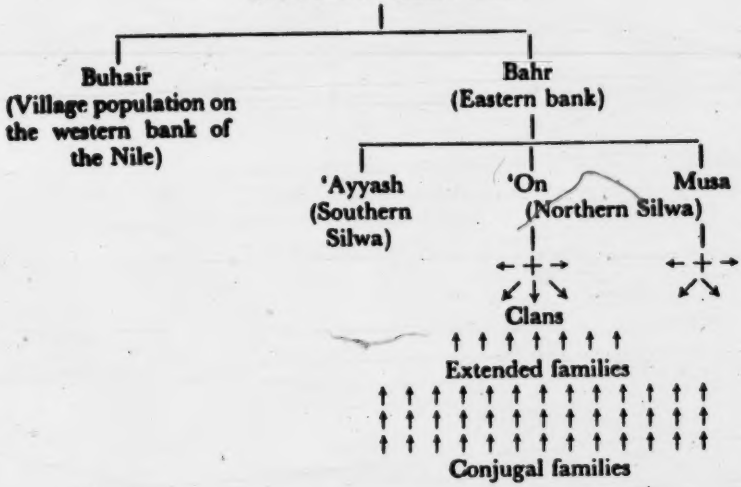

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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 574 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 [609] [576] The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope. [576]

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 578 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588–9.

437 At last business is over. Before sundown, after interminable parleyings, the fellah goes home with goods or money calculated to increase his well-being, or at least with pleasant memories of a day full of sights and sounds.

484 571 Pilgrimages and markets swell the traffic on the country roads. Here again can be seen the love of the fellaheen for crowding together and moving only in congested groups.

484 If they have to cross the Nile or a canal to reach the village opposite, the fellaheen throng so densely into the [505 292] ferry-boat or raft (*ma'adiya*) that accidents are frequent. When they set out on foot or on donkey-back, laden with 494] astonishing bundles, it looks like an evacuation. When for a long journey they take the *trombil* or *halazona* — an old Ford converted into a bus — forty of them push their way in where there is room for only twenty, and they take it very ill if police regulations are enforced. One of the reasons for a certain minister's unpopularity in the country was his insistence on applying these regulations. When they have [497] to travel by train, they arrive several hours beforehand, cluster on a corner of the platform, and scramble all together into one carriage, even if there is plenty of room elsewhere.

In general, then, the fellaheen like being together, out of doors and in crowds. They are sociable people. But does this mean that they are socially minded? Is there any organic relationship between the members of the peasant group?

361 181 Let us first of all consider the village as a whole. This with its surrounding land forms a closed system outside which everyone and everything is foreign and unknown. It leads a secluded and individual life, which is organised from within by habits, customs and taboos handed down from the distant past, immemorial laws which rule absolutely the acts and the pleasures of every inhabitant.

181 619 The fellah finds the same difficulty in widening his outlook in space as in projecting himself into the future and practising foresight. His village is all in all, for it is here and now. It is his country, and the limit of his patriotism.

When a fellah is asked about his nationality, he will reply: "I am from the village of Manfaloot, or Abu Korkas", and occasionally, a little more widely: "I am from the Mudiriya of Menufiya, or Assiut", but rarely, if ever, "I

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving
home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 265.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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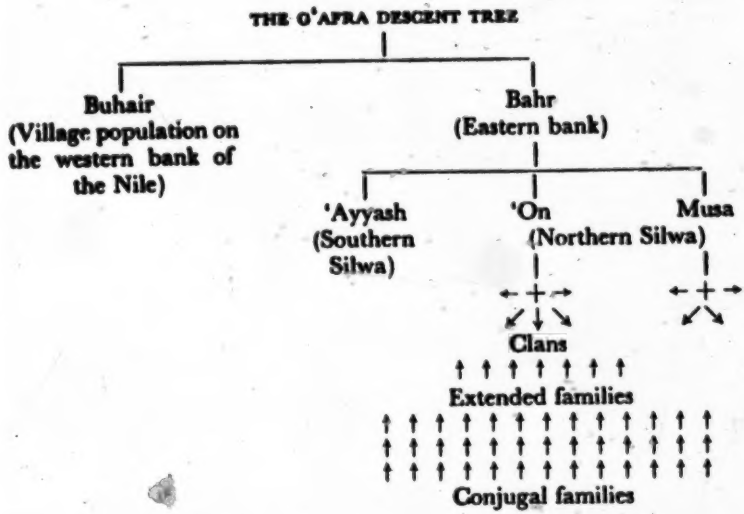
THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The genealogical pattern, based on the 48 lateral descent, repeats itself
621 with diminishing range throughout the social structure of the village down to the smallest unit. The village is divided into two parts, each of which is subdivided into clans, and these in turn are composed of a number of extended families.[1] The whole structure of the village, as well as that of the
619 whole socio-geographic region of G'afra, could be likened to a centrifugal mechanism spreading out and out in ever-widening circles. Certain common structural norms of behaviour permeate the various segments of the centrifugal structure, manifesting themselves in varying degrees and in different circumstances.[2]



596 Pride of belonging to a particular family, especially more obvious in the
186 circle of the extended family, reflects itself in one's pride in the clan, the section, the village, and in the holy descent of the G'afra stock. In the case of extended families, pride manifests itself in possessing a common horse which runs in races held on the celebration of saintly occasions, in having
613 a name for hospitality, or for scholarship and piety. Pride of clan is linked
616 with activities in the guest house, or co-operation in digging a well. Pride in one's section is revealed on communal celebrations especially during the
186 celebration of the Prophet's birthday; each section proclaiming that it has carried it out in a more spectacular manner as each usually has its 'mar-
619 quee' for listening to the recital of Koran and mawals (popular songs). At
186 the level of the G'afra as such, the sense of pride reveals itself in their holy

[1] See Nadel, 'Beni-Amer. Society', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1, 44.

[2] The word 'structural' here is used in the sense employed by Bateson to denote standardized details of behaviour. *Naven*, p. 25.

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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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military defeat meant the ousting of one ruling power by another.[1] Although it is these rulers who have engaged the main interest of historians, it is the habits and traditions of the common folk that have, in fact, been the ultimate forces determining the general run of Egyptian life. What Gruening wrote of Mexico, quoted by Redfield, is equally applicable to the situation in Egypt. 'In few countries is political history less significant than in Mexico, yet its historiographies are pre-eminently political.' Redfield continues: 'The formal institutions, the explicit statement of programme or policy, the bulk of contemporary documents, lie remote from the ways of the masses and record their history almost not at all. The world of the cultivated classes who alone are articulate and alone communicate freely with us, is a world apart from that of the folk.'[2]

Only to a very small extent has Silwa been affected by the forces mentioned earlier. It still preserves its folk culture as the basis of its community life. The village is a homogeneous community in the threefold implication of the term. It is homogeneous to the extent that the villagers belong, or at least consider themselves to belong, to one blood group, engaging in the same kind of work, and, moreover, characterized by slow rate of social change.[3]

The question of social change exists, however, in terms of 'setting and background', and not by itself. 'This is why a discussion of change in culture has meaning only as part of the problem of cultural stability. Both terms are relative and dependent on one another.'[4]

In the process of social change examined in Yucatan, Redfield maintains that the life of primitive peoples can be contrasted with the way of life characterizing civilization in modern urban centres. He maintains that the change is one from a relatively immobile, homogeneous society in which relationships are personal, controls familial, sanctions sacred, with a well-integrated culture, to one tending to have opposite characteristics. In short, organization, individualization, and secularization are causally interrelated with isolation, integration, and homogeneity. In Yucatan, the

[1] Gibb and Bowen say that during the Ottoman rule of the Arab Provinces, and even before that, governors and governed had little effect on each other. 'The explanation is to be found in the very lack of a complex, all-embracing political organization. . . . We may visualize Moslem society as composed of two co-existing groups, the relations between which were for the most part formal and superficial. One group formed the governing class of soldiers and officials, the other the governed class of merchants, artisans and cultivators. Each was organized internally on independent lines and neither group interfered with the organization of the other in normal circumstances.' *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 209.

[2] Quoted by R. Redfield, *Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village*, p. 1: 'In Egypt at present, the new social order is deliberately attempting to bridge the gap between these two social strata. Many of the new legislations aim at minimizing disparities between citizens and at providing equal opportunities for all.'

[3] See Margaret Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory', in *Social Structure*, p. 21.

[4] Melville J. Herskovits, 'The Processes of Cultural Change', in *Science of Man*, p. 144.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361 133
barely visible, though always very compact.

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel-
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (44).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live (47).

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 513 [783] [782] [779] In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his 512 264 [272] [276] [265] [262] pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, 512 461 [539] works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. [521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire [574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the 512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn [539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is [621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even [782] before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed. 796

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices. 796 262 [621]

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month 796 [785]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such mal-distribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

578 593 Another dispute between two brothers was where the younger accused the older of being a spendthrift, and in his extravagance, mainly due to his wife, he 'spoilt' the reputation of the family by borrowing from other people though he earned more than his younger brother. In spite of the often repeated admonition of the younger, the older brother persisted in his ways. The misunderstanding became acute when both agreed to build a new house, the younger undertaking the expenses of the building, to be paid by his brother for his share, which he had not done. The dispute flared up again when the older brother got his daughter married without consulting the younger brother.

578 622 595 Another dispute which has been dragging on for a considerable time is that over the office of 'Omda'. For the last fifty years the office had been in one family. The death of the previous Omda started the strife between his sons from different mothers. He had six children from one wife and five from another. During his lifetime, the two houses united in service and respect for the father in spite of the seamy side of relationship. Immediately he died ten years ago, the suppressed rivalries and jealousies flared up. The sons disagreed as to who was to be elected for the office. An Arab council met and decided to put up the second son from the first wife (as the first son was illiterate).[1] The other house had to submit to the decisions of the council; yet the rivalry never died down, and the brothers from the other house still waited their chance. After devious intrigues, the Omda was suspended for corrupt conduct related to the system of rationing. After the lengthy court procedures which took almost a whole year, he was found not guilty. The time for filling the vacant post of Omda came, and the deposed Omda as well as the eldest brother of the other house entered their names officially as candidates. It is interesting to note that the three surviving uncles of the two candidates were with the new one. [604] One of the main reasons for their not supporting the deposed Omda was that he did not treat them as paternal uncles as they expected him to do. Moreover, on certain occasions he insisted that they should stand for him, as they used to do for his father—an attitude they resented. On the election day both the candidates went to the 'Mudeeriah' in Aswan, followed by dozens of their supporters. The new candidate gained the office this time; thereupon, the other house started their intrigues to depose him.

578 593 A mother quarrelled with her son because he did not give her as much attention and economic support as he did his wife. The son had to leave the village and took a domestic job in Cairo. The mother sued her son in the court because he did not support her in old age while he was earning money. Indeed a great deal of discord occurs as a result of the conflicts between the loyalties and obligations towards 'the family of orientation' and 'the conjugal family' and the in-law relatives. It is often said that the newly married person has two minds, to denote the [604]

[1] After the death of an Omda his sons are usually considered for succession; in fact, the Omda's sons, even during his lifetime, are addressed as Omdas.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God.

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life.

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted.

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered.

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of
●622 his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station,
[625] with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of
642 the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[432] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.
[261] [2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 392 241 312 776 Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 622 312 Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. F 782 776 This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made! C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 622 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 798 766 741 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 775 766 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

E F 369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen, F [622 563] 443] shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E F 369 423 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the E separate circle of the Princes.

563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* ([15]), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take E F from them what they have to give.

421 134 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

In Upper Egypt, strung out along the Nile Valley, are 635
eight more provinces, named with one exception after their chief towns (*bandars*). These are, from north to south, Giza, Beni-Suef, Fayûm, Minia, Assiut, Girga, Qena and Aswan.

At the head of each province, called *mudiriya*, is a high official called the *mudîr*. His authority comes directly from the Ministry of the Interior, and he is frequently transferred. If he distinguishes himself he is brought nearer the capital, or even becomes a minister. On the other hand, if he falls out of favour he may be sent further south. He settles as the Government's representative in the more or less important but never very attractive town which is the capital of his *mudiriya*. As he is naturally more in touch with great men than with small, he has no direct knowledge of the fellaheen, who moreover cannot come into direct contact with him. They hear him spoken of, pay the taxes due to him, and catch a glimpse of him when an official visit brings him to their village. They think of him as being of a higher race than themselves, and revere him as a kind of demi-god. To them he seems all-powerful.

Outside the chief town the Mudeer's authority is exer- 634
cised by Maamûrs. Each *mudiriya* is divided into *markaz* or 625
police districts, from three to seven in number, except for Gharbiya, the most densely populated, which has twelve. The *maamûr*, a kind of chief constable, controls a police force distributed among the principal villages of his *markaz*. He is an executive officer enjoying very wide powers. The fellah thinks them unlimited, and has a corresponding respect for the man who exercises them.

The Maamûr is the fellah's king. The story is told of a fellah who said to the Khedive 'Abbas, in all good faith: 'God save you, and make you our *maamûr*.'

Yet even the *maamûr* does not know the fellaheen, their affairs, or their families, except through the *omda*. And the limited knowledge which the fellah has of politics or administration — citizen and voter though he be — comes to him through his *omda*, who for him is the sum of the law.

Each of the 4,000 villages of Egypt is governed by an 622
omda or mayor. He is nominated from among the leading inhabitants of the village which he rules and of which he often owns a part. Indeed he cannot be a candidate for

622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffirs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the
692 value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various
624 privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffirs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who
622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial,
692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*,
695 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con-
[681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffirs*.'

622 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine
692 up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

'omda's house takes its place. All day long he is receiving 622
petitioners or travellers, unless he is going the rounds with 692
some official or inspecting his own fields. He pays frequent visits to the chief town of the district, either for business or for pleasure.

This uncontrolled system, though it has many advantages 692
for the Government, is full of drawbacks for the fellah, 578
abandoned as he is to a master who knows no more about administration than about justice. There are indeed exceptions, but they are as yet few. The system is also prejudicial to public security. Crimes may easily be concealed, or even foisted upon the innocent, by such an autocracy. Village feuds usually owe their origin and persistence to the rivalries aroused by this office.

At Nahyet el Barûd, in the *markaz* of Abu Tîg, a new 622
'omda was to be nominated. Among the candidates for the 666
position two were outstanding, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Zeid and Sheikh Ahmed Farghali. One of these had been dismissed from the post by official action; the other, who had been *omda* in 1931, had also been dismissed by the Nessim Pasha Ministry. Both candidates were much feared in the district, and each had a large band of supporters. The committee which had to count the votes and then decide the election was formed of the *maamûr*, representatives of the neighbouring villages, and the *maazûn* of the village itself. However, the eligibility of the *maazûn*, as being a relative of one of the candidates, was challenged by the other. The authorities of the *markaz* then let it be known that the *maazûn* of another village would sit in his place. But on the day of the election, which was to be decided by a show of hands, it was seen that the first *maazûn* was still on the committee. His enemy's supporters objected, while his own friends upheld him, and the two parties came to blows. Worse than this, they made use of whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and a savage battle ensued. Before the police could intervene, three men had been killed and a number of others seriously wounded. The authorities arrested both candidates. The *mudîr* of Assiut gave orders that elections at Nahyet el Barûd and the neighbouring villages should be suspended until order was re-established (11th July, 1937).

Towards his superiors, whether officials or landlords, the 181
fellah adopts an attitude of awesome respect, of servility

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
● 622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.
647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

123.

Unfaithfulness.

×539 ●622 661 Šēḫ el-balad is the mayor or head of the village. This office still exists, although much of its power has been transferred to the ʿomde, another of the magistrates of the village.

Minni lē, minni lē,
ya-bnaiye? u-rdēti lē?
Šēḫ baladi wanaʾul-lo ē?
iddāni iš-šabbē, ṭaḥant ʿalē!

"Why dost thou shun me, why dost thou shun me,
My little maid? And why hast thou dealt so ill?"
"He is the shēkh of my village, and what can I say to him?
[231] He loaned me the buffalo-calf and I have ground with it!"

3. How could I, a poor girl, refuse the great man?
4. "Moreover, I was under obligations to him." The mills are often turned by buffaloes.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations
692 between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one
[554] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined by saying 'Arab compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 165.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire 654
station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this para- 341
dise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet 361
been carried out (74).

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is 653
a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it 654
or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more 657
useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit (75).

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that 623 ●
of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were 744
elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

witnessed, and which is typical as there is hardly any variation in the form it takes. 585

A is a boy who had recently been rejected for military conscription, on grounds of poor eyesight; he is known to be a good farmer, and a great help to his father. He was the eldest son in the family and felt that his father delayed his marriage unduly as 'fathers usually get their first sons married as early as possible'. After he was rejected for conscription, this boy could no longer bear any delay. As the custom is, he sent 'messengers' to persuade his father to get him married, as 'everybody was telling him that it was high time he got married'. On the other hand, his father was reluctant; he was in a quandary whether or not to proceed with this project; he was apprehensive that the lad might not be so devoted to his work after marriage, yet he felt the time was ripe for getting his son married, otherwise the boy might at any time 'bring disgrace' on the family. The lad's last appeal to the father was through a messenger who pointed out to the father that if the necessary steps for marriage were not instantly undertaken, the boy might think of leaving the village to find some work elsewhere. The father gave his consent, realizing that he would have to get his son married: 'There will be more "baraka" if it is done soon.'[1] The actual preparations would start in a month's time, when the harvest was ready. 582 [702]

Now a dilemma of choice faced the parents, as there were two girls of marriageable age in the family; one was the daughter of the boy's maternal uncle and the other of the paternal uncle. It was partly because of the mother's influence, and partly because of the boy's personal inclinations that his parents decided to marry him to his maternal cousin. This affronted the boy's paternal uncle, as his daughter, according to custom, had precedence over that of the maternal uncle. This man asked the lad's father for an 'Arab verdict' on the matter, and a formal gathering of relatives and some neighbours brought apparent reconciliation between the two brothers. They all agreed that 'although the boy was to get married into his mother's family the oil was still preserved in the house (zaitakum fi baitakum) and that he was not marrying a stranger'. Yet this slight was not forgotten and caused some tension and vituperation between some of the paternal and maternal relatives during the celebration of the ceremony. [584] [578]

The date of writing the marriage contract was then fixed. The father of the boy and his relatives and friends went to the house of the girl's father asking for her hand for their son in the usual phrase of 'talbeen al gurb' (literally 'we desire to get closer to you'). Neither the boy nor the girl was present during this gathering for writing the contract. Before the contract was written, the registrar (maazoon)[2] enunciated the following, which was 584

[1] This remark of the father indicated his social obligation for the marriage of his son; its counterpart is for the son to accept his father's arrangement for his marriage.

[2] The 'maazoon' is a learned man who keeps the official register of marriage and divorce. He is officially appointed after an examination in the Koran and the Sharia; it is an unpaid job. [694]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins. 628 152 689

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities. 527 688 624

[411] [29]

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing [411] right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffirs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the
692 value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various
624 privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffirs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who
622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial,
692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*,
695 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con-
[681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffirs*.'

622 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine
692 up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

×539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

[501] 2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabîye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

[1103] 4. 5. eš-šar'ĭye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbĭye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāziq (Za'āzĭ') and Ṭanṭa.

[114] 8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

×539 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamāsni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

● [624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'. 000

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money. 607 621 454 [877]

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis. 607 621 476

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families. 607 621 425

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa). 621 627 666 624 616 666 [607]

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[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms. [804]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village
622 in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station, with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with
[625] the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main
642 complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[432] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[261] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Every one who brings goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held. 443 407

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). 443

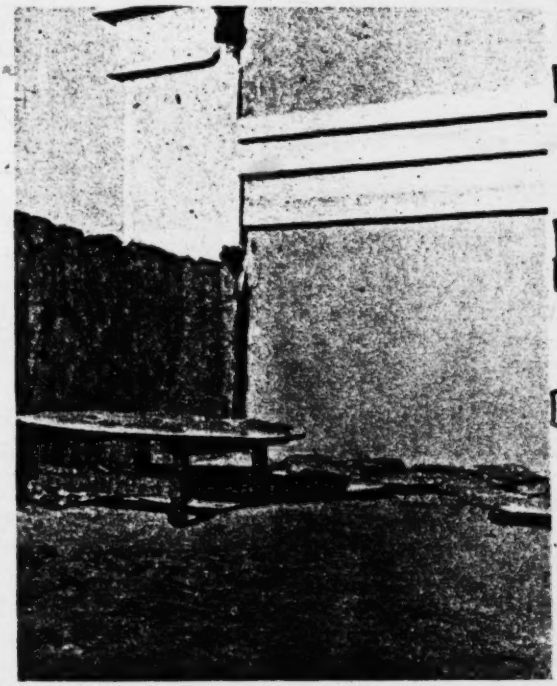

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *ḳafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires. [415] [052] [352] [605] [463]

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be 000

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The F 346 792

There are today more than fifteen thousand *ezbas*. Their 361
importance and the number of their inhabitants are proportionate to the area of the estate. Some have grown into full-sized villages, but most of them depend, administratively, on the village from which they sprang.

Not only the houses on an *ezba*, but all the imp- 361
lements and machinery, too, whether ancient, like the 422
saqia and the *norag*, or modern, like the pumping-engine and 427
the threshing-machine, together with the store-houses and, more often than not, the animals, belong to the owner of the estate. If he cultivates it directly, the fellaheen are day-labourers; if not, they are usually tenants or share-croppers. In either case they are in a sense bound to the soil, and remain so in spite of changes of ownership, unless evicted for some other reason.

It may be that the owner has mortgaged his land. 427
About a million feddans are thus burdened. If he cannot 423
pay the interest, the bank forecloses. In 1935 fifty thousand 425
feddans were thus expropriated because of debt.

It often happens that the holdings of the fellaheen are seized at the same moment. But who is there to discriminate? They may already have paid the Bey or the Pasha their dues, and are in no way responsible for his debts; but that is no concern of the creditors, who needs must foreclose on the mortgage.

One of the large banks had seized an *ezba* belonging to 427
a notable of the region of Shoubra Ris, in the Markaz of 625
Kafr-el-Zayyât. A number of lots on this *ezba* had been let 579
out to villagers, many of whom had been living on them for 423
upwards of twenty years. When the bank's bailiff arrived to carry out the seizure, the villagers resisted him, and the police had to interfere. The assistant chief constable of the *markaz* arrived on the scene at the head of an armed force, but was attacked by the people. Seeing that the situation promised to grow more serious, he felt himself obliged to order shots to be fired in the air to frighten the fellaheen. The effect was to exasperate them. They proceeded to cut the telephone wires and burn the bailiff's car. A new body of police soon came to the rescue, but proved as useless as the first. Finally the Mudeer appeared on the scene at the head of yet a third force and order was re-established only when fur-

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *ezba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee land lords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

In Upper Egypt, strung out along the Nile Valley, are 635
eight more provinces, named with one exception after their chief towns (*bandars*). These are, from north to south, Giza, Beni-Suef, Fayûm, Minia, Assiut, Girga, Qena and Aswan.

At the head of each province, called *mudiriya*, is a high official called the *mudîr*. His authority comes directly from the Ministry of the Interior, and he is frequently transferred. If he distinguishes himself he is brought nearer the capital, or even becomes a minister. On the other hand, if he falls out of favour he may be sent further south. He settles as the Government's representative in the more or less important but never very attractive town which is the capital of his *mudiriya*. As he is naturally more in touch with great men than with small, he has no direct knowledge of the fellaheen, who moreover cannot come into direct contact with him. They hear him spoken of, pay the taxes due to him, and catch a glimpse of him when an official visit brings him to their village. They think of him as being of a higher race than themselves, and revere him as a kind of demi-god. To them he seems all-powerful.

Outside the chief town the Mudeer's authority is exer- 634
cised by Maamûrs. Each *mudiriya* is divided into *markaz* or 625
police districts, from three to seven in number, except for Gharbiya, the most densely populated, which has twelve. The *maamûr*, a kind of chief constable, controls a police force distributed among the principal villages of his *markaz*. He is an executive officer enjoying very wide powers. The fellah thinks them unlimited, and has a corresponding respect for the man who exercises them.

The Maamûr is the fellah's king. The story is told of a fellah who said to the Khedive 'Abbas, in all good faith: 'God save you, and make you our *maamûr*.'

Yet even the *maamûr* does not know the fellaheen, their affairs, or their families, except through the *omda*. And the limited knowledge which the fellah has of politics or administration — citizen and voter though he be — comes to him through his *omda*, who for him is the sum of the law.

Each of the 4,000 villages of Egypt is governed by an 622
omda or mayor. He is nominated from among the leading inhabitants of the village which he rules and of which he often owns a part. Indeed he cannot be a candidate for

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

61.

A Mother's Solicitude.

×539 [361] [491] In Middle and Lower Egypt, the villages are connected with one another by earthen dikes, which, during the time of the inundation, form the only communicating roads.

[625] The police are always at hand to imprison people. At roll-call, often, one or another of our workmen was announced as maḥbûs or "imprisoned".

Ma-lik betigri 'al-gusūr u-ḫēfe?
bagri 'ala waladi ḫadû eṭ-ṭēfe.

Why dost thou run so anxiously about on the dikes?
I seek my son, whom the patrol has caught!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many 796
strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels 541
behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry
the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered [578]
with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the
main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with
a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of
the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is
also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has
his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable simi-
larity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues [174]
of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are col-
lected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed
by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon
rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments,
gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity.
Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get
their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head [534]
the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums
and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night
watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials [625]
in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual
fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the
muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province [635]
or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the pro-
cession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of
Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular
troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led
by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under
the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have
been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their
rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before
every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns [535]
and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh [533]
are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more
musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispens-
able even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to
have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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261 attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months,
[862] extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of
[431] chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the
[431] shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of
[521] wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in
[431] attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

778 Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being
261 believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the
[869] ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

● 626 Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract
[461] social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling
[554] that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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mitting adultery is motivated by emulation', 'Make your harvest look big, otherwise your enemies will rejoice'.[1]

The pride in the family unity and name is associated with its labour on the land. One can see the effect of the driving motive of emulation in the appearance of the outer sections nearer to the road or to the canal. Special attention is always given to these sections, as they are usually the most elevated and best cultivated sections of the land. The main ideal for which every family strives is to be 'mastourah', which literally means to be covered, or, in other words, to be balanced and publicly approved and not exposed to outside shaming. The special attention given to the outer sections of the field would at least rid the farmer of shame, if the rest of his field were not properly cultivated. Esteem and honour are accorded by the villagers to those who have made a success of their farming, and this is usually mixed up with a feeling of envy. To be an industrious farmer attending to his business is a good qualification for a youth about to get married, while slothfulness militates against his chances. Parents stimulate their sons of marriageable age to work hard as an incentive for their marriage as early as possible.

In a discussion of livelihood in the village, an evaluation of the standard of living is a necessary step for the full appreciation of the villagers' life. It has been made clear by anthropologists that the standard of living is not only a matter of production and consumption, but equally depends on the cultural values that govern these processes. 'In no society do we find people consuming whatever comes to hand or producing the minimum necessary for existence with the least possible effort. Man is a rational being, and hence there are reasons to be discovered for his choice of food and clothing and for the efforts which he makes to produce the objects of his choice.'[2] These cultural premises are implicit in every society, determining, to a great extent, the ways in which individuals handle their 'material culture'.[3]

In the previous pages reference has been made to some of the social incentives for work, but accumulation of wealth has not been included. For contentment with what one possesses, as predestined by God, is the keynote of the villagers' happiness. In some dwellings and guest houses this ideal is written on the wall, 'Contentment is an inexhaustible treasure'. One should not amass wealth, but should spend it in pious acts, otherwise, according to the Koran, as Ali recited, 'With the gold and silver a man accumulates he would be seared on the forehead, on the side, and on the

[1] A popular story is told about a jealous farmer whose neighbour enquired from him about the amount of fertilizer he distributed in every section (hod). He told him that he usually put two basketfuls; and thus the neighbour followed his advice. But later on the latter found that his cultivation was not as good as that of the farmer, and discovered that it was due to the fact that his neighbour used to distribute three baskets, and not two as he had told him.

[2] Margaret Read, *Native Standards of Living and the African Culture Change*, p. 11.

[3] For a quantitative assessment of the standard of living in Silwa, see Appendix III.

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy for the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—for the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 55.

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classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions. 178 574 [431] [556]

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran-carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies. 178 554

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'. 178 369

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business. 178 [606]

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1] 369 [828]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 182 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

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Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages: 843 [842] [115]

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage. [753]

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period. [876]

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth. [262]

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain- [626]

[p. 86 is blank]

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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and [788] filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle over her body on her return.

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865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incen- [626] tives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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him was that of cousin-uncle, and I used to call him Uncle Mahmoud, 159
which he used to appreciate very much.

Mahmoud is the eldest and head of a family of four brothers and a half-sister, as well as a cousin living together with them. Only one of the four brothers is a full brother of Mahmoud, the other being half-brothers, while the cousin is from the paternal side, and is also the half-brother (uterine) of the other two from their mother.

Mahmoud himself was first married to his cousin, whom he divorced after having a daughter from her. He remarried, but only one daughter has survived from his second wife, and the death of his son at the age of three was due, as he thinks, to the sorcery of his first wife. Two years after the death of his first wife, her daughter was married to Hassan, Mahmoud's cousin: there is one son. One of his brothers is married to a close relative of Mahmoud's wife, and all the brothers at present are married and work together, although recently two of them went to live in new and separate houses. Before the last two brothers married, all of them were working on their land as well as three acres they usually rent. More than ten years ago one of the brothers went off to work in Cairo as a domestic servant, and since then he has never settled in the village, but pays visits occasionally to see his wife and family.

None of the brothers is literate, except the youngest, who had been conscripted into the army and has there learned to read and write as part of the army's literacy campaign for conscripts. After completing his service he volunteered as a lorry driver in the army, where he works now, leaving his wife and a small boy under the guardianship of his brother, Mahmoud.

Returning to Mahmoud himself, he worked as a farmer until the age of thirty, then he became the head of the village police (ghafeer) and this job seems to have given much scope for his pride and energy. He would usually talk about the order he maintained in the village while he was occupying that post, and emphasize the fact that everybody respected and even feared him. He was dismissed from this post after he had struck [683]
someone in a fight, and for this offence he was imprisoned for eighteen months.

During his work as head of 'ghafeers', Mahmoud related with great pride that he managed to prevent the women from going to fill their jars from the Nile on account of certain rumours which had spread in the [626]
village about their behaviour along the agricultural road, and this temporary action from his side was met with general approval. It also befell him to carry out the wishes of the preacher from the city, to prevent women [178]
from following the bier of the deceased as mentioned in the chapter on social change. He added that, after his time, women reverted to their old practice.

Mahmoud goes to town now and again on business, but, apart from such interruptions, he spends most of his time in the village tending to his farm. Three years ago, one of his half-brothers had a disagreement with

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, 613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is 682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call 627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be [779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is 156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com- 182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. 561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as [291] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out- 561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the 888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship [576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, 560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.'
When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.
When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.
When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.
When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

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613 627 two joint families to 'level all the misunderstandings' between them. The dispute had arisen between the two joint families of 'Amareen and Karamsha, both belonging to the 'Amrab clan, Musiab section. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, the head of the first family, asked the Karamsha to lend him one of their camels to carry some maize straw from the field, but his request was refused because they alleged that they had no camels to spare as they were engaged in building a house. On another occasion, Hag Ahmad 'Imran insisted on taking the camel from one of the Karamsha while he was bringing water to be used in the building; people interfered and the matter was settled for the time being. After three days, he made another attempt and slapped the camel-driver, 'Othman, on the face, cursing his people. 'Othman, the offended man, could not retaliate as Hag Ahmad was the senior man of his family and older than he, and it is 'impolite' according to Arab traditions to slap such a man. People immediately gathered to settle this affair temporarily and prevent any further complications. Then Hag Ahmad's son came on the spot and started to insult 'Othman (who was his brother-in-law) and 'Othman, finding his equal, stood up to the challenge, but people intervened. The dispute, in spite of its temporary ending, had left 'something in the souls of the two houses'.

The 'residue in the souls' came up to the surface when the pilgrims from the clan came back from Mecca and had to be invited by the heads of the clan. The 'Amareen invited the Karamsha to co-operate, but the latter declined. In the meantime, it happened that a member of the Karamsha offered his help for the occasion but was refused by the 'Amareen. This added fuel to the fire and the situation between the two families became tense.

Deputations and mediators went between the two families to fix an 'Arab council' for arbitration. A respected and pious man suggested the family of Badawab for the purpose, but the Karamsha objected on the grounds that the former house was closely related to the 'Amareen. Then the arbitration was raised to the clan level and the Hasaballab clan from 'Onab section (to which neither side belonged) was suggested and this was accepted by both sides. On the appointed evening, the adult members of the two houses came to the Hasaballab guest house, where they were received and tea was served.

The meeting started by the Hasaballab head clansman reciting [788] 'Wahhidouh ya Gamaa—Say that God is one, O gathering'. Everybody present answered, 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet'. Then the chosen head of the Hasaballab asked the Karamsha, 'What is your story?' 'Abd-el-Gid, the head of the Karamsha, stated, 'We are claiming duties from the 'Amareen'. Then the head of the Hasaballab proposed that after sitting together in their guest house, the two sides should reconcile 'on the white and the reading of Fatiha', meaning that they should root out the past misunderstandings, and should forget all

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about them without going into any argument. The Karamsha, however, who were the accusers, opposed the suggestion and insisted on their case being heard, and consequently their rights being acknowledged. The argument was stated by the head of the Karamsha speaking and being interrupted by members of the disputing house here and there, as well as by members of his house. Then Hag Ahmad 'Imran began to defend his case, and then free argument took place. 613 627

One of the most effective devices in the Arab councils is the so-called 'mulakah' (a getting together), where on any dilemma in the course of argument, one or two persons from the mediators take one person or more from the disputing sides for a 'mulakah' to persuade him in a corner, or another room away from the general meeting, through personal and more intimate hearing to follow what the mediators proposed. Their usual form of pressure is to appeal to the person to 'consider the Arabs, or the people, or his kinsfolk'. The idea behind this device is to avoid any personal embarrassment or retreat in public, as this brings shame ('ar). If the retreat is accepted on a more intimate level, then the person has retreated owing to the pressure brought upon him because of personal ties or to his considerations to the 'Arabs', yet such a formulation of retreat is only implicit. [56]

However, the 'mulakah' which occurred three times during the meeting did not produce the required effects. The Hasaballah, the arbitrating clan, had then to go outside by themselves to agree on 'the rights of the Arabs which no one now should fear to declare'.

The formulation of the verdict is very interesting as an index of the functioning elements of the social structure. The Hasaballah declared two decisions; the first was that Hag Ahmad 'Imran committed a double wrong by slapping 'Othman the camel-driver, and by not preventing, even by slapping, his son from getting entangled with 'Othman. The second decision was that the clan of 'Amrab, to which the two disputing families belong, had committed a mistake by not mediating between the two families in due time.

As the disputants are morally compelled to accept the arbitration of whoever they agree upon to take this part, the 'Amareen had to shake hands with the Karamsha, followed by all present reading the Fatiha.

Yet this was not the end of everything in this Arab council. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, feeling that injustice had been done to him, immediately declared that he 'claimed rights from Hasaballah', meaning that he wanted to sue the arbitrating clan before another clan, a charge which they have to accept. The case now is between the 'Amareen and the Hasaballah, and they both agreed to appoint the 'Awadallah clan in the neighbouring village to take up the arbitration between them.[1] If the Hasaballah's verdict is considered unjust, they have to pay the 'Amareen

[1] If any clan or family is appealed to by both disputing parties for arbitration, it cannot refuse to act.

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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations
692 between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one
[154] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined. By saying 'God compensate me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that Chose Progress*, p. 165.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

[62] [82] One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced [197] into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still [411] continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

[50]

FIG. 50. CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

[411] nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE LAW OF REVENGE

and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. [312] [685] [241]

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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criminals sometimes escape punishment, in spite of the skill and patience displayed by many of the officials in unravelling the mass of conflicting evidence. To this skill and patience I can myself testify, and also to the obstinate refusal of witnesses to give any incriminating evidence, for I have been present over and over again at criminal investigations.

However, we must not pass too harsh a judgment on the attempts of the villagers to frustrate the aims of justice. Even in England people would hesitate to assist the law if it were known that to give evidence against even the most depraved criminal meant almost certain death at the hands of the avengers. Foreigners who have little or no knowledge of the customs prevailing among the peasants are inclined to be too severe in their criticism of the Egyptian officials when they fail to obtain sufficient evidence to convict almost undoubted criminals. But English officials who have lived in the provinces of Egypt and in close contact with the people realize how difficult a matter this is. To my mind the wonder is not the number of crimes that go unpunished for lack of evidence, but the number of criminals whose crimes are detected and who are brought to justice.

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is *bread and salt between us*' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields
692 or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one
[154] circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.

In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined. By saying 'God compensates me in a better way'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 163.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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883 and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
539 and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
533 When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

883 On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in
894 another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which
628 would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

869 It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of
869 adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the
880 dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *felláḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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502 628 The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

628 609

[411]

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

[126]

[152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

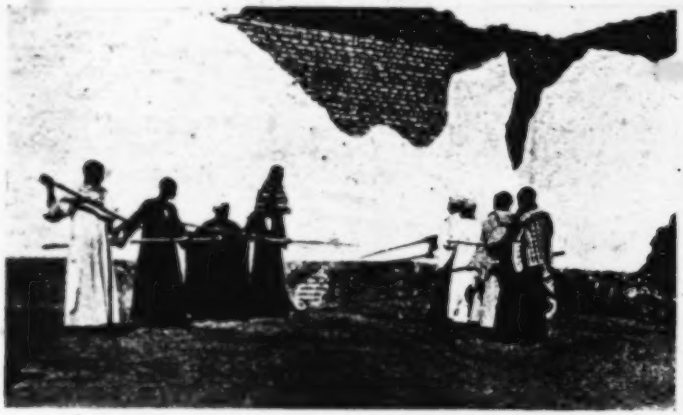

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhiliya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

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life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 63 84 829

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. [361]

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. [593]

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

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631 headquarters. From the point of view of central government, the province of Aswan is divided into three centres (Markaz) with a 'Mamour' in charge of each. Aswan is the capital of the province where the 'Mudeeriah' lies with a 'Mudeer' at the top.

619 574 Another incident which occurred during the writer's field work reflects the villagers' pride in their ancestry, working as a cohesive force. Clan heads and other representatives from the village paid a visit to a town called Bardis in Girga Province. The visit was in return for a visit paid by a group of people from Bardis who came to invite the Silwanians to Bardis to establish and confirm their holy descent as being related to the G'afra. This idea had started when some pilgrims from Silwa met others from the same stock coming from Bardis. Immediately they tried to find out whether they were related; genealogies were cited; and they discovered that they were connected in lineage. The group in Bardis seized upon this chance as their status amongst the other families in Bardis had not hitherto been accepted as equivalent; they thus wished to confirm their status as of 'holy origin'. The group that visited Bardis for this purpose was, of course, composed of the clan heads, or their eldest sons, 'people who could converse', a learned religious man, and two elderly men well conversant in genealogies. On their arrival at Bardis they were generously entertained for four days. After the visit, the group from Bardis wrote in *al-Ahram*, one of the widely circulated newspapers, thanking their 'paternal cousins' for the honour they had done them by their visit.

602 [609] [576] The desire for kinship relationship arises, if not in such a spectacular manner, on occasions of everyday life. It is not unusual to find village folk eager to establish some kinship relation with a stranger in the train, or with a casual guest in the guest house. To address people politely is to call them by kinship idioms. Villagers, as well as town and city dwellers, on enquiring about the way, begin, for example, by saying, 'O brother', or 'O paternal uncle, could you tell me the way to so and so'. In letter writing it is very common for friends to address each other by saying, 'My dear brother', and to write the appropriate kinship term on the envelope. [576]

Yet the kinship structure carries within itself the defects and weaknesses of its strength. It not only functions as a cohesive and articulating force, but equally as a source of friction and sectional bias. Because the village is so mixed up in blood relationships, it suffers from all the intrigues and maladjustment that emanate from so much impinging of social relationships.

602 578 The disharmony occurs not only between families or clans, but also between very close kin. If it is claimed that every culture is characterized by a major type conflict, upon which the minor and atypical conflicts of the individual are patterned, then Silwa community suffers greatly from the stresses and strains that obtain between relatives.[1] Whether the cause is division of land, marriage problems, or reputation and prestige,

[1] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Beliefs concerning Twins', in *American Anthropologist*, 1940, pp. 588–9.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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In Upper Egypt, strung out along the Nile Valley, are 635
eight more provinces, named with one exception after their chief towns (*bandars*). These are, from north to south, Giza, Beni-Suef, Fayûm, Minia, Assiut, Girga, Qena and Aswan.

At the head of each province, called *mudiriya*, is a high official called the *mudîr*. His authority comes directly from the Ministry of the Interior, and he is frequently transferred. If he distinguishes himself he is brought nearer the capital, or even becomes a minister. On the other hand, if he falls out of favour he may be sent further south. He settles as the Government's representative in the more or less important but never very attractive town which is the capital of his *mudiriya*. As he is naturally more in touch with great men than with small, he has no direct knowledge of the fellaheen, who moreover cannot come into direct contact with him. They hear him spoken of, pay the taxes due to him, and catch a glimpse of him when an official visit brings him to their village. They think of him as being of a higher race than themselves, and revere him as a kind of demi-god. To them he seems all-powerful.

Outside the chief town the Mudeer's authority is exer- 634
cised by Maamûrs. Each *mudiriya* is divided into *markaz* or 625
police districts, from three to seven in number, except for Gharbiya, the most densely populated, which has twelve. The *maamûr*, a kind of chief constable, controls a police force distributed among the principal villages of his *markaz*. He is an executive officer enjoying very wide powers. The fellah thinks them unlimited, and has a corresponding respect for the man who exercises them.

The Maamûr is the fellah's king. The story is told of a fellah who said to the Khedive 'Abbas, in all good faith: 'God save you, and make you our *maamûr*.'

Yet even the *maamûr* does not know the fellaheen, their affairs, or their families, except through the *omda*. And the limited knowledge which the fellah has of politics or administration — citizen and voter though he be — comes to him through his *omda*, who for him is the sum of the law.

Each of the 4,000 villages of Egypt is governed by an 622
omda or mayor. He is nominated from among the leading inhabitants of the village which he rules and of which he often owns a part. Indeed he cannot be a candidate for

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter I

CHANGELESSNESS

The fellaheen (¹), that is to say the country labourers 101
of Egypt, whose life is the subject of the following chapters, 161
represent something more than a mere class. As a uniform, autochthonous mass, which constitutes more than three quarters of the total population, they may rightly be called the people of Egypt.

This people, which produced the earliest civilisation, 101
or at any rate a civilisation of great originality that has 175
lasted for fifty centuries, shows exceptional powers of survival and persistence.

The fellaheen have changed their masters, their religion, 175
their language and their crops, but not their manner of life. 178
From the distant epochs of the Old Kingdom to the climax of [636]
the dynastic period the Egyptian people preserved and maintained itself. Under foreign domination, for years or centuries at a time, by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, French and English, it has remained unchangingly the same. Even today the fellaheen play practically no part in the Egyptian renaissance, or the movement for independence and progress.

They were at first pagans carrying totemism to the point of zoolatry, then for ten centuries Christians who reached the heights of asceticism and martyrdom. They made no difficulties about accepting Islam, and yet thirteen hundred years of Mohammedanism have done little to change their fundamental beliefs.

They are a receptive, yet resistant people; patient, 181
but unyielding. Although they have dwelt so long at the crossroads of international traffic, in a country which has been the scene of earth-shaking events, they remain as calm and unmoved as the depths of the sea beneath a storm.

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. E 873
In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria.
The Government's primary and secondary schools count E
their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed [872]
with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, E
reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the [204 214]
best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not E
more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-* [658]
Fellah, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to E 814
Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo 815
or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national E 812
language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, 814
something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not 641
just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this 178
development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal? E F
Are they following the élite of the cities? The answer is: 369
either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is 178
discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelm- 212
ing majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise E
it. ("") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who F 636
developed everything in Egypt except education; with the 181
fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no 871
eagerness to learn; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of F
the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know 212
how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (¹³).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
466 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (¹⁴). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
[651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
[453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed after the last war.

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of providing loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot.

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The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour.

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The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have

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The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son. 641 179

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1930 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

641 [944] 655 641 [558] [119] [453] [456] [426]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Thus it is obvious that most of the Government institutions have not yielded the results expected from them in the village. So far the health unit, the agricultural bank, and the compulsory school have proved to be failures. This is mainly attributed to the lack of co-operation from the villagers as a result of the clash between their traditional views and practices and the new institutions, the purposes of which have never been explained or made comprehensible to the villagers.

It is appropriate here also to mention the ideal of hospitality which has been affected by the process of social change. The villagers regret the waning of the idea of hospitality defined in terms of ability to render it when the occasion arises. Hospitality is conceived also in terms of offering food to guests, relatives, or casual *en route* visitors to the village. It also involves distributing wealth on ceremonial occasions such as circumcision and wedding, the failure of which would subject a person to severe criticism. To be able to conform to these standards is one of the chief attributes of authority, prestige, self-respect, and social recognition. The ideal personality type, alongside with the pious man, is the hospitable man. The common saying runs: 'He who is hospitable will never suffer in this world.' The hospitable person should offer without being asked, and should insist when the receiver is reluctant to accept; otherwise his hospitality is like that of the boatmen—who, being uncertain of their food resources, cannot be hospitable. By offering hospitality a person in fact creates bonds between himself and the partakers, where the latter respond in terms of respect, service, reciprocal hospitality, or at least prayers, in the case of the poor. The ideal is certainly that of giving away, and not of accumulating. Those who accumulate without giving are described as 'rotting', or like the 'cord that holds the knickers'—implying that they are insignificant and socially unworthy of recognition.

This gradual dwindling of hospitality, so much deplored by the villagers, is mainly due to the fact that there are few families in the village who can afford to adopt the traditional ideal. This is certainly a result of the change in the economic structure of the village due to the constant division of land and the increase in population. Moreover, with increasing contacts with city ways, the villagers are more aware of the importance of money and the personal benefits derived from its purchasing power; and the recognition attached to hospitality, though upheld and valued as an ideal, is offset by the new acquisitive spirit. In this connection, my informant, Ali, told me that in the good old days if a visitor expressed his appreciation of an object or a utensil, the host usually offered it to him, but this is no longer the general rule. The spirit, however, still persists in the case of a woman visitor who, for instance, admires the tea offered to

there developed, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the banking institutions and commercial customs which were to become those of Europe, and which are quite inconsistent with the Quranic Law'. *Muslim Institutions* (translated from the French), London, 1950, pp. 190–1.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[P.240 is blank]

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (11).

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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God.

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life.

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted.

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered.

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for

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178 municipal or provincial government officials, and representing the village
672 in government affairs. The Omda of the village is elected on the basis of
his land property, and has been the symbol of authority and responsibility
642 on behalf of the village. Now, with the establishment of a police station,
with the availability of more people who can write out complaints, with
[625] the decrease of the wealth of the village Omda, and consequently with his inability to provide hospitality in the traditional way, or to represent the village properly without extending his hands for help from the village, his authority has been flouted and people tend to send their complaints and disputes directly to the police station or to the provincial authorities. They complain that the Omda is not what he used to be in the good old days, responsible for reception and accommodation of government officials, generous to chance travellers, or to the needy poor.[1] In a conversation between the writer and the Omda, the latter answered the villagers' allegations by saying 'If the Omda or any other man in his position would stick to what these people expect from his generosity, he would run the risk of complete bankruptcy'. The decrease of the headman's authority reveals itself in the local remarks such as 'We have an Omda without land', or expressing their dissatisfaction with regard to some unsettled disputes, the villagers would say 'It is a village without an Omda'.

[554] By the weakening of his position, the Omda has lost prestige and people compare him with his powerful and domineering predecessor 'during whose days no one could open his mouth' and 'no children could play about'. In fact, this brings us to the personal qualities of the present Omda who is actually a pleasant and genial personality. But the people think of authority as necessarily involving an assertion of power and domination. For the same reason people praised my informant Mahmoud when he was in office as head of the ghafeers. If one wields power, one must be powerful and forceful, the villagers say, otherwise one would not be respected and feared. Gibb and Bowen mentioned something similar to this attitude towards authority in the Arab provinces in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Al-Jabarti wrote: 'If the peasants were administered by a compassionate multazim, they despised him and his agents, delayed payment of his taxes, called him by feminine names. . . .' The prevalence of such a conception of authority confers privilege and prerogatives and is enforced upon the minds of the people by long centuries of misrule and oppression, supplemented by the religious habits of stoicism, passing into fatalism.[2]

178 The weakening of the role of leadership in the village is one of the main
642 complaints that one quite often hears, either with regard to the prestige of the Omda, or with respect to the influence of the Arab councils or the relationship between the older and younger people. With disputes referred

[574] [1] The tradition of hospitality in the village leads to the fact that bread and milk cannot
[432] be sold on a commercial basis without bringing shame to the seller. This tradition still
[261] persists while that connected with selling of milk is less rigidly observed.

[2] H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 205.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellah..n MR13
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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

643

643 CHIEF EXECUTIVE--type of executive (e.g., paramount chief, king, president); plural executives (e.g., peace chief and war leader, king and chief priest, constitutional monarch and prime minister, triumvirate, executive council); authority (e.g., supreme, nominal, dependent upon personal qualities); prestige (e.g., sanctity of person, divine descent); functions (e.g., administrative, judicial, military, religious); prerogatives; symbols of office; mode of selection (e.g., by election, seniority, matrilineal or patrilineal succession); qualifications (e.g., age, sex, rank, wealth, prowess, piety); installation; termination of tenure (e.g., deposition, expiration of term, killing of divine king); etc. See also:

Executives and rule of succession in the family . 59
Executives and succession in kin groups 61
Dynastic lists and genealogies 173
Executives and succession in the community . . 623
Mortuary rites 784, 786

In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*). E F 423

The State and the Land

T F 175 656 423 651 643

In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

T F 423 651 656

Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

T F 423

In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market. E F #23 794 429

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life. F [461]

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans. F 423

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners. E F 423 643

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which should take into consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

427 ther shots had been fired into the air. Seven of the policemen
625 were wounded by stones thrown at them by the villagers.
579 Several villagers were arrested, and a judicial enquiry was
423 opened. This incident, which took place in 1936, is by no means abnormal. As is usual on such occasions, the landowner himself was absent.

423 The big landowner, even if he be of fellah origin — and
427 the proportion of land owned by native Egyptians is
369 ever on the increase — takes no interest in his *izba* except as a source of income. Like the absentee landlords of Irish history, or the pluralist rectors of seventeenth-century England, he goes as seldom, and stays as short a time, as possible. He knows his labourers only by the cash which his *nâzir* sends him; their families he does not know at all. Of their lives and needs as human beings and members of society he is sublimely ignorant. For the big landowner is Europeanised. He lives in Cairo or Alexandria and spends the summer in Europe. Everyone knows how prodigal he is of his wealth, the wealth of Egypt. In one evening he will fling away enough to keep his fellaheen alive for a whole year. Their poverty and his own luxury seem equally natural to him.

565 Between his men and himself there is no sort of bond.
643 He has no traditions linking him to this or that village. In Egypt today there is no landed aristocracy, only an aristocracy of wealth; and wealth gravitates to the town.

It is related that on one of his visits to the country the late King Fuad stopped to witness the songs and dances which a few fellaheen had improvised for him by the wayside. A courtly minister was astonished at this condescension and said:

'What generosity, Your Majesty, to waste ten minutes like this!'

'But for these fellaheen, Your Excellency,' replied the King, 'you would not have an income of five thousand pounds, nor be either a minister or a pasha.'

565 Contempt for the fellah has become so deep rooted in the
369 minds of his 'superiors' that the very word has become the worst of insults. Call anyone 'fellah', and it is as if you had said 'lout', 'scum', or even worse. Among the rich there is often complete indifference to the fellaheen. For them

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

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643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

535 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

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231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.

647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

At Work on the Excavations

a) General.

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24.

1. The overseers, who are appointed by the Administration of Antiquities for every field of excavation, are often mere custodians from the museum, or something similar, but in their new position they often like to play the gentleman in their dress.

So this one has put on a ṭarbûsh, the red cap with a dark blue tassel, more familiar to us by the name of fez. [292]

He sits on an elevation, in order to gain a better oversight, and to be out of the dust.

Da-l-efendi ʾaʿid ʿala-l-ʿelwe
biṭ-ṭarbūš wer-raʾabe-l-ḥelwe.

See, the efendi sits upon the height,
With the ṭarbûsh and the sweet neck.

1. Efendi is properly the term of address for Turks (it is the Greek αὐθέντης), now commonly used for officials and all other men of some rank. [576]

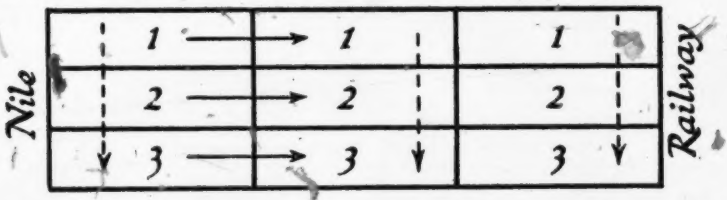
2. The word "sweet" is used by the peasant about as frequently as it is by our school-girls. For comparison one should recall the sun-burned, callous neck of a genuine peasant (Vollers). [192]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

428 according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay [651] his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than [578] not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway [311] station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging [425] to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

241 The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. [651 669] These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrizi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Egypt MR1

Turkish Egypt MR2

E F 423

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The State and the Land

T F 175 656 423 651 643

In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

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Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

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In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Turkish Egypt MR2
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423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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651 661 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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659 423 651 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarcation. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name ([14]).

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651 134 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Government already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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based on the same scale of value, varies between 14 and 164 piastres.

Law No. 143, of 1939, fixed the new tax at 16% of the rentable value of the land, according to estimates made throughout the country by special commissions, and based on the average rentals for the previous ten years. However, as before, the maximum tax cannot exceed 164 piastres per feddan.

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There was no change in the date-palm tax, which until 1920 stood at 21 piastres per tree, with a five-yearly census; or in the irrigation tax, viz 50 piastres per feddan where *sêfi* irrigation could be carried out by natural means (free flow), and 30 piastres for land to which the water had to be raised by mechanical means (lift flow).

Rebates are provided for when crops have deteriorated owing to lack of water, or where irrigation would have been unduly expensive. The tax is payable by the owner alone.

The date of payment, as well as the rate, is fixed beforehand. It varies for each province, according to the times of the main harvests, and payments are made by instalments, so that at the end of the year the whole amount due for the 24 kirats composing each feddan is paid up. For example in Qalioubiya two parts are payable in January, three in March, three in April, eight in October and eight in November.

The tax is collected at the owner's house by a *sarraf*, and the demand note (*wird*), when countersigned, serves as a receipt. If, as often happens, payments are in arrears, the Government obtains payment by distraint and forced sale. For example, to take the *Journal Officiel* for January 1937 only, there are 732 seizures listed, almost all of quite small holdings. These seizures are always advertised in the same terms:

'January 19, 1937. 3 kirats belonging to Imam Imam Ibrahim, situated in the village of Kafr Mansour, Toukh Markaz, in Medawwar *hôd* No. 4, Lot 19, seized according to *procès-verbal* of March 2, 1936, in payment of arrears. Price L.E. 9.600 for the portion seized.'

The Government shows more patience with big landowners. 'It is not just', a *sarraf* once admitted to me. In practice there may be injustice, but the rate of taxation is quite just, and except in times of crisis not unduly high.

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It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

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Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (''). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

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it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

427 511 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken from us, we will steal." ([22])

The Fellah as Landowner

423 554 183 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 651 452 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 427 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner ([23]).

423 432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo(**). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Im-
[439 ports have tripled in a few years. The Government has
65] also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fellaheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
466 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661 suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
453 keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (¹⁰). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *halâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafftr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

113 [464 857] and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

27. [651] "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

28. [249 136] GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

29. [465] Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

31. [249] One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

33. [426 735] The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

38. [302] There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

×539 461 [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballāṣ aḥḍar u-melān!
Ya giďān, iďu rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

[192] 1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsē ḥiggi, balāš dalāʿa;
di šuṛlē mīri wa-la fīšē šafāʿa.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl usīye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".

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exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

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it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out ([illegible]).

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor ? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit ([illegible]).

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals ? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Today only 25% of the population, that is to say the 271
inhabitants of the towns, drink pure water. A few new 312
waterworks are established from time to time. In 1940 the whole *mudiriya* of the Fayûm, the furthest from the Nile, was fitted up with a model installation. But the fellaheen are still slow to make use of these benefits. For example at Nekhéla, a big village of 20,000 souls near Abu Tig, a drinking-water supply was recently introduced by the progressive local Council. The women have to pay one millieme to fill a petrol tin or *ballas* at the public tap. But they prefer to use the river-water, which is abundant and free of charge. *Ghaffirs* have had to be posted to prevent them from doing so and to force them to profit by the progress they scorn.

The creation of model villages has been more tempting 361
to Governments. Mohammed Aly over a century ago 185
established a dozen places on a rectilinear plan to serve as 654
examples for others. Unfortunately the example of the unplanned villages was stronger, and today these places are scarcely distinguishable from the rest.

In 1914 the Khedive Abbas II inaugurated three rectilinear villages, each containing 180 houses, 169 of which were for the fellaheen and the rest for public services. Each dwelling consisted of two rooms and a yard. This experiment also failed, as the tenants modified the houses to suit their needs.

Nevertheless, after a twenty years' interval opinion is again turning to model villages. At the desire of the late King Fuad the farms on the Royal Domains have built for the labourers working on them symmetrical rows of houses with only a ground floor. They look like prisons to us, but to the fellaheen they are palaces.

Similar constructions have been planned or copied by a fair number of landowners, who have built cell-like dwellings of red or unbaked bricks for the fellaheen on their *'ezbas*.

The most interesting achievement, however, is that of the *'ezba* of Bahteem, belonging to the Royal Agricultural Society. The first part, finished in 1934, comprises thirty houses for workers and three for officials, together with public buildings. The dwellings run from north to south in five rows, and each row is divided into two groups by a street, widening into a square in the middle. Between each pair of

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654 rows there is a street six yards wide, so that sunlight can penetrate into every dwelling.

The houses are of red brick, with concrete ceilings, and the floors inside are raised a foot above street level. The roof is about thirteen feet from the ground. Twenty of the houses are two-roomed, with a yard inside and a shed for cattle. Ten larger houses have three rooms, with a hall and outhouses. These are occupied by two families each, usually those of a father and his son.

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Six baking-ovens have been built outside the housing-area, so that the smoke may not trouble the inhabitants. They are used by all the families in turn. There are also six shower-baths, four for men and two for women, together with laundry facilities.

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The village hall will hold seventy people; it is used for feasts, marriages and funerals. The mosque covers about 600 square feet. The school, which follows the syllabus for compulsory elementary education, is open to boys and girls. Shops have been opened in order that the people may buy what they want on the spot, and there is a great enclosure with six depots for storing the various crops, fodder for the animals, and agricultural implements.

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Water to fill the tanks is drawn from a well by a pumping machine. But this was an expensive experiment, costing L.E. 10,000, and could not be copied by private persons. Something more economical had to be found, which without sacrificing public health would be better adapted to the habits of the fellaheen. In 1935 the Royal Agricultural Society laid a new experiment before the landowners. Twenty houses of different kinds were built in blocks of four, separated by twenty-foot roads. Here the walls are of unbaked brick, and the roof of wood. There are two rooms about fifteen feet by twelve, a small yard, and an inside oven. Each dwelling costs L.E. 25 as against the L.E. 125 of the first plan.

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The Government, for its part, has decided to build a model village in each *mudiriya*, beginning with the rebuilding of Mit Fares in Lower Egypt, which was destroyed by fire. The plan allows for houses of one or two stories with drinking-water and interior drainage; wide streets lined with trees; in the centre a mosque, a school, and a hall for meetings; and on the outskirts a market-place for the

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out (74). 654 341 361

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The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers, youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–55.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [602] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

1859 required that land in the villages be entered in the Government Land Register. This enforcement of registration resulted in many head clans, or village sheikhs (headmen) entering as much as they could of the village land as their property; in other cases, many owners had to abandon their land for fear of taxation.[1]

Moreover the great stretches of land recovered by Muhammad Ali and his successors were given over tax free to some wealthy notables and foreigners, and this group constitutes part of the big landowners in Egypt at present.[2]

[1] Alfred Bonne, *State and Economics in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] It must be noted here that after the completion of this work, the system of land ownership in Egypt has undergone radical change, a measure which was overdue for the establishment of the foundations of social justice. The abdication of ex-King Farouk and the seizure of power by the Army in July 1952 marked a new era in the life of the country. The new regime made land reform a central issue in its programme and passed the Law of Agrarian Reform. This law decreed that no landowner should possess more than 200 acres. Large estates over this size are to be expropriated with reasonable compensation for the owners. The expropriated land is to be distributed over a period of five years to landless villagers, to agricultural workers and to farmers with holdings less than five acres. For the full text of the law, see R. el-Barrawy, *The Military Coup in Egypt*, Cairo, 1952.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she 846
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [1176]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's [807]
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [783]
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 43
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding 858
his mother's or father's old wrappings.

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 842
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their [581]
father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa
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APPENDIX II

few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:

He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:

If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:

Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:

Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:

In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:

The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:

One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:

The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:

The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:

Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:

One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:

Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.

[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [779]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*, who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [767]
remains of the soap used in the washing. [793]

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [751]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

done so, but that he had dropped it inside his trunk. He went back to the school, searched his trunk carefully, and found the key, as the man had told him he would.

The *zār* is not necessarily followed by the ceremony called the *ṣulḥeh*; this takes place when a sheikh has troubled a man or woman for some time, and at last becomes appeased. It is a form of peace-making between the sheikh and the person he possesses. If anyone is possessed by more than one sheikh it is not necessary to kill more than one sheep at the *ṣulḥeh*; one victim appeases them all.

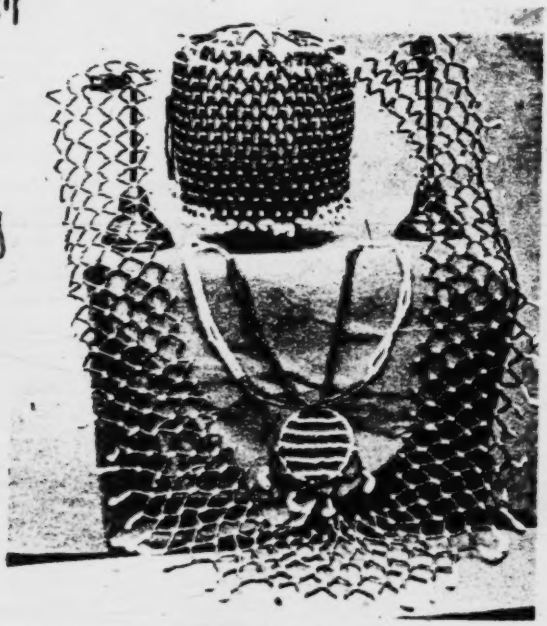

FIG. 120. ORNAMENTS—BELT, PENDANT, AND CAP—SOMETIMES WORN BY A WOMAN AT A ZĀR
The beads are green and white.

This belief, that it is possible to be thus possessed by a sheikh, is a very baneful one. The women who suppose themselves to be thus affected become exceedingly hysterical, and their husbands, for fear of the consequences, are put to great expense. The officials are quite rightly trying to put an end to the holding of the *zār*, but to suppress this ceremony completely will be difficult, as the beliefs associated with it are so deeply rooted in the peasants' minds.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*).

The State and the Land

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In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government dépot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

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Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

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In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

423 The great estates lie chiefly in Upper Egypt and in the
427 newly reclaimed areas of the Delta. They do not always remain under the same ownership, and certain estates have changed hands six times in twenty years, without, however, any variation in their methods of working.

The great landowners run their estates indirectly by the help of their *daira* and of *nâzirs* in the same way as companies such as the Kom Ombo Sugar Factories, banks such as the *Crédit Foncier* and the Land Bank, the large *wakfs* and the State Domains.

The *daira* is the town office for administration and accountancy. It makes orders and purchases, arranges advances and sales and pays the taxes.

The *nâzir*, a bailiff or agent, is the owner's representative on the estate and is the real executive, on whom the whole system depends for its working. He is as obsequious to his master as he is stern to the fellaheen. His business is to exert all possible pressure on the agricultural machinery, that is, the fellaheen, in order to increase the output. He is like a saw that cuts both ways, as his victims put it. He controls the ploughing, manuring, sowing and harvesting by a rule-of-thumb routine. However, landowners would rather rely on his experience than employ agricultural engineers, who are not yet taking the part for which they are qualified in Egyptian rural affairs.

[643] On the State Domains and the estates of the King and Princes the management is more varied. The different services are grouped in a *tefteesh* or inspectorate, and installed in an *ezba*.

361 The *ezba* is an inseparable part of the larger estates.
656 It is a homestead for the estate workers, separated from the village, and constituting a hamlet which belongs entirely to the estate owner. This arrangement, which is less than a century old, was legally established in 1913, and modified slightly in 1933.

"No *ezba* may be established on any estate without the consent of the Provincial Council, which should take into consideration the extent of the petitioner's estate, its distance from the village, and the number of farm labourers to be housed there." For the law is still valid which forbids "the building, by whosoever it may be, of any manner of dwelling upon cultivated land outside the recognised village area".

423 Small properties do not result solely from the sub-
425 division of inheritances, but also from the acquisition of
426 tiny plots as money becomes available. The fellah is so hungry for land that he buys it, more often than not, at a ruinous price; this is also partly because he buys only a few *kirats* at a time. In order to pay for it he supplements his savings by contracting a debt.

423 The demand is so high that the lots are sold for the best
425 price offered, and, in forced sales, by auction. Here is
426 an example of what may happen. Ten feddans are on sale for
556 L.E. 400. A dozen fellaheen join together to buy them at that price, and divide them up among themselves. But a rich landowner of the neighbourhood gets wind of the business. He arrives a few hours before the sale and sits down at a café in full view of everybody. He boasts openly that he is ready to buy the lot at no matter what price. The fellaheen, threatened with disappointment, come up and beg him to withdraw, offering money as compensation. He lets them plead, bargains with them, then pockets his gains and leaves the village, in high glee at the success of his stratagem, which he will repeat when opportunity offers. The fellaheen, who have given him L.E. 10 for nothing, think the bargain good.

The Government

●656 The Government, by its control of the land, and still
[312] more of the water, is supreme over capital and labour, and over the peasant class. As master of the irrigation system, it assumes for the fellah all the power and importance of the Nile. The more the State regulates the river, the greater the dependence on it of both soil and men of the soil.

As Egypt is an agricultural country, almost every Government organisation is, in the long run, giving orders to the fellah. In industry and in the large towns, the Government willingly entrusts the public services to private enterprise. In agricultural matters, on the contrary, it assumes many functions which in other countries are undertaken by private persons. So much so that for the rural population the Government is a kind of overriding providence, while the fellah is regarded by the Government as a helpless child, who has constantly to be ordered about and protected from his own ignorance.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

241 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth down-
312 ward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20,
476] according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is
[887 left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their
857] ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious water-ing raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-
[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer*, *febrayer*, *mâris*, *abrîl*, *myo*, *yûnyo*, *yûlyo*, *oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

597 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 183

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fel- 721
laheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanûsh, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

● 656 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
731 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

353 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
sîga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (¹⁰). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *halâkâ* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafîr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

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735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.

656 The greater number of official measures, for example,
746 are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

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material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has
been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate
to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common
property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough
for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed
their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings,
though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements
it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come
regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure
from it. It would be an even greater danger to public
health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy
base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts,
but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed,
at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand
pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields.
The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of
from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is
beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken
only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-
cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the
skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-
cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of
the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished
by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance,
and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

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compulsory, met with little success, and had to be suppressed 453
after the last war.

In 1902, after a trial by the National Bank, the Agricul- 453
tural Bank of Egypt was founded, with the object of pro- 426
viding loans to small farmers at the legal rate of 9%. It opened agencies in all the principal townships, and enjoyed the privilege of being repaid before the taxes. At first it was a success. But the formalities were too complicated, the agencies too far from borrowers in the small villages, the date of repayment too rigidly insisted on, and the whole transaction too public. The fellah preferred to fall back on his moneylender, who was on the spot.

The success of the Agricultural Bank might indeed have been greater if the application of the Five-Feddan Law, by making mortgages impossible, had not dealt it a fatal blow. From the date of this Act the bank abandoned its earlier policy, and in 1930 it went into liquidation.

The system was revived in an improved form in 1931, 657
with the creation of the *Crédit Agricole d'Egypte*, founded 426
by the Government with the co-operation of the big Cairo 474
anks. To assist its operations the Government agreed to advance a million pounds and suspended the Five-Feddan Law in its favour.

The new institution gives advances to small-holders at 7% and to co-operative societies at 5% up to the amounts required for cultivation and harvesting, for the purchase of cattle, and for the improvement of land. It sells selected seeds and manures on credit to small tenant farmers and share-croppers, and advances them up to 80 % of the value of their crops, if these are deposited in the bank's *shoonas*, scattered all over the country. Understanding the fellah mentality, and profiting by the experience of the Agricultural Bank, it has decentralised its operations, leaving fairly wide powers of discretion to its agents, who go into the villages and reduce formalities to a minimum. It has thus won the confidence of the fellaheen and drawn many of them out of the clutches of the moneylenders, without itself suffering in any way from its own creditors. Nevertheless, it is already tending more and more to help the middle and larger landowners.

The reader will have noted the special conditions granted 474
by the *Crédit Agricole* to co-operative societies. These have

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474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (¹⁰). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *halâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

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weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out (74). 654 341 361

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit (75). 653 654 657

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be 623 744

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Eleven

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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After reviewing the indigenous aims and methods of learning and teaching, we turn now to the modern system of schooling which has affected the village as a result of the national educational policy. This type of schooling is represented in the two schools of the village, the compulsory and the primary school.

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The compulsory school was established by the Provincial Council in 1925. In discussing the village compulsory school one must inevitably touch on educational problems at the national level. Compulsory schools were established to meet the long-felt need for mass literacy. The 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls. Accordingly the Ministry of Education planned to put this article into effect. The Ministry's scheme rejected the Kuttab as completely inadequate to cope with the problems of illiteracy, and of no educational value. Hence, new schools, called 'compulsory schools', had to be established. The period of compulsory education was to be for five years (from seven to twelve years old) on a half-day basis. The object of this programme was to benefit the maximum number of boys and girls. The time limit for completing the programme of compulsory education by providing a place for every child and thus abolishing illiteracy was fixed as fifteen years, and was extended later to twenty years.[1] The scheme was based on the participation of the Provincial Councils with the Ministry of Education, the former to be responsible for the sites, buildings, furniture and equipment; the latter for the staffing and administration. In 1933, owing to the difficulties entailed in the previous programme, a new education bill was passed to enforce attendance between the ages of seven and twelve, thus reducing the period to five years instead of six, and still on the half-day basis. Only those who suffer from physical or mental diseases, or those who live more than two kilometres from the nearest school, are exempt. The law also stipulates that the child's parents or guardians are responsible for his education in a compulsory school, if he is not receiving education else-

[1] Al-Kabbani, *Siasat al-T'alim fi Misr*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 9–10 (Arabic).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of school-children during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

872 such a high prestige as they lead to the coveted government posts. In fact, a child leaving the compulsory school at the age of twelve cannot proceed to a secondary school education, except through the primary school, which he is now too old to enter. It must be pointed out here that the primary school leading to secondary and higher education has been a different type of school from the elementary school. In this way, the elementary school population has been debarred from any further educational facilities, except the elementary Teacher Training Schools and al-Azhar. This handicap of the compulsory school has stimulated the idea of unifying the first stage of education for all children of six to twelve years of age, as is the case in other democratic countries. The Elementary Education Act, passed by the Parliament in 1948, was the crowning effort of the previous attempt to bring the primary and elementary schools together. In theory, at least, the curriculum and the equipment at the elementary school are to be brought up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the primary school. In addition to that, the half-day system is to be abolished, and the elementary course is to extend to six years on a full-day basis from six to twelve.[1]

The compulsory school in Silwa has not felt the impact of the new changes except in the name, being called the converted primary school: it has remained the same both in building, equipment and content of education, as well as the period of schooling from seven to twelve, and no children have been transferred from the primary school, as they have never reached the standards required.

Unattracted by the compulsory school, the villagers have been clamouring for a primary school, the desire for which has been motivated by practical purposes. In spite of the Elementary Education Act of 1948, the primary school is, in the villagers' view, the only way leading to government jobs, and thus for wealth and prestige. It happened that during the early days of my stay in the village (December 1950), the Minister of Education in Egypt appealed to the rich to contribute liberally in money or in premises for educational purposes. On this occasion the member of the Upper House for Silwa was persuaded by the villagers to build the school and offer it to the Minister. The site was chosen, and the building was just beginning when the writer left the village in April 1951. The new primary school has actually been functioning since October of the same year. The school takes children from the age of seven to twelve on the basis of an entrance examination in reading, writing, arithmetic and

[1] *Ministry of Education Report*, 1947–8, pp. 3–4 (in Arabic), Government Press, Cairo, 1948. New laws have been recently enacted (May–June 1953) for the reorganization of the educational system in Egypt. The struggle for the unified school is being won. The system is divided into three stages: 1. primary (6–10); 2. preparatory (10–12); 3. secondary (12–16). Curricula for the various stages are under review for their adaptation to the needs of the learners.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Turkish Egypt MR2
Egypt MR1

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423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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651 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry
661 into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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659 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarcation. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural
423 boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*,
651 consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name ([16]).

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651 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Government already had sufficient data to establish a general
134 rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

E F 651

It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

E F 659 311 464

Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

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Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (''). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

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[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kalâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghaffîr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Turkish Egypt MR2
Egypt MR1

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423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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651 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry
661 into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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659 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarca-
423 tion. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural
651 boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name ([14]).

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651 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Govern-
134 ment already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

[651 681 731 661]

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

123.

Unfaithfulness.

×539 622 661 Šēḫ el-balad is the mayor or head of the village. This office still exists, although much of its power has been transferred to the ʿomde, another of the magistrates of the village.

Minni lē, minni lē,
ya-bnaiye? u-rdēti lē?
Šēḫ baladi wanaʾul-lo ē?
iddāni iš-šabbē, ṭaḥant ʿalē!

"Why dost thou shun me, why dost thou shun me,
My little maid? And why hast thou dealt so ill?"
"He is the shēkh of my village, and what can I say to him?
[231] He loaned me the buffalo-calf and I have ground with it!"

3. How could I, a poor girl, refuse the great man?
4. "Moreover, I was under obligations to him." The mills are often turned by buffaloes.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR 1

CHAPTER X

THE FELLAH AND PROGRESS

In the great square in front of Cairo station stands a massive group of statuary hewn from Aswan granite. It represents the Sphinx rising on its forefeet, with a woman standing beside it, her hand on the nape of its neck, and her veil raised. This is *The Reawakening of Egypt*, by an Egyptian sculptor, Mukhtar. E 532

During the last half century Egypt has made more progress than any other Near Eastern or Islamic country. Politically she has become independent first of Turkey and then of England, and established herself as a sovereign State. This evolution has been made possible by the birth and growth in a whole class of the idea of nationality and a consciousness of the destiny of the Egyptian nation. Since 1923 the Kingdom of Egypt has had Ambassadors and Consuls abroad, a purely Egyptian Government, a parliamentary life and an opposition, universal suffrage and political parties with electoral programmes, ministries and a more and more specialised civil service — in short the whole paraphernalia of a modern state. E 175 178

Nevertheless this political life affects only a tenth of the total population. The fellaheen, who constitute the remaining nine-tenths of passive and unorganised citizens, take no more part in it now than formerly, when Turks or English ruled the country. F 181 184

They are either ignorant of the existence of all these new ideas we have just mentioned, or they have no understanding of them. They are Wafdists if you like — that is to say, members of the Nationalist Party — in the sense that the *'Omda* or the political agents have written their names in the party lists, but they are neither active members nor even supporters in the way Russian peasants would be, for example. No-one has taught them their rights and privileges. Demo- F 184 665

F 184 665 cratic forms can never have been so misleading. But that is not the worst evil, as we shall see.

E 652 439 651 The economic progress of Egypt is as striking as its political development. The country's financial prosperity is remarkable. Even before the war the State had a gold reserve of thirty million pounds, and between 1925 and 1935 it almost doubled. The budget never shows a deficit. The constant increase of revenues from the Customs and the railways, the capital of the limited companies, both foreign and Egyptian, the development of local industry (the Bank Misr companies employ 200,000 men), the place of Egyptian cotton on the world's market, the improved quality of the crops, the systematic extension of perennial irrigation and therefore of agricultural production — all these are signs of prosperity.

F 178 But this progress has resulted in no increased well-being for the fellah. His standard of life and his methods of work have remained unchanged, for all this progress was based on his labour. His ignorance and stagnation were the conditions for this capitalist prosperity.

F [248 249] 'The so-called rich crops', wrote an economist some time ago, 'that is to say cotton and sugar-cane, will not fail to influence the evolution of the fellaheen, since the one develops capital, which will effect an improvement in agriculture, and the other industry, which will sharpen the fellah's wits by the use of machinery.'

F 511 In fact, neither capital nor industry has helped the fellaheen. Both before and after the boom of 1920 their financial affairs were as bad and their poverty as great as a hundred or a thousand years ago. There are even signs, and that in official reports ([10]), of a lowering of the standard of living. It is the fashion to attribute this to the increase in the population, though 'Aly Shamsy Pasha also cites 'the unequal distribution of agricultural wealth' ([11]). In the midst of this poverty in prosperity there are still landowners whose incomes are L.E. 12,000 to L.E. 15,000 a year.

F 183 Yet here again the evil must not be exaggerated. There may be something worse than poverty — ignorance.

E 873 The intellectual revival of Egypt has been dazzling. Under the reign of Fuad I especially, learned institutions were multiplied. The Fuad I University, which did not exist twenty-five years ago, has today nearly 10,000 students,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ancestry. Marriage outside the stock must be with those who can claim an equally holy descent.

The second important norm that governs the whole social structure is the weight and respect given to, and the authority wielded by, the person who plays the role of the senior, normally chosen on age basis as well as on capacity to speak and argue well, besides other factors such as economic status and social prestige. This pattern which, in the smallest unit, is the authority of the father is extended to the oldest capable member of the extended family, to the head of the clan, and to the village councils that congregate spontaneously, having no formal composition.

The third aspect which asserts itself in the various units of the social structure is the feeling of fellowship. The individual finds himself consciously or unconsciously merged into the group. Starting in this case with the largest unit of G'afra as a whole, one is not surprised to find that no elaborate electioneering campaign is required to persuade the G'afra villages to vote for the candidate who belongs to their stock. In fact, the same candidate for Silwa constituency (including the town of Edfu) has won the last three elections with a sweeping majority, irrespective of the political views of his opponents. Throughout the whole of Silwa region, the opposing candidate had never secured more than a hundred votes out of at least three thousand. The rule is that the people of Silwa should vote for their 'paternal cousin'. Yet in the last elections another candidate from the G'afra, the official holder of the ancestry register and a religious man whose grandfather was the leader in the mystic order of the village, stood for the elections to compete with the previous member [1] The reason for that, I was told, is that they once had a heated argument as to whose father was the more respected and honoured man amongst the G'afra. It was also generally believed that the new candidate was encouraged by the 'Ababda. The G'afra split their votes between the two, neither thereby winning the elections. This is strong evidence that kinship relations, and not party politics, decide the issue of the elections in this community.

On the clan level, the sentiment of fellowship shows itself in all the activities connected with the guest house. Suppose a distinguished guest has come to the guest house, e.g. a well-known religious man, or a man with social prestige from a neighbouring town; it is not only one man who receives him, but as many as possible of the heads of the extended families of the clan; and he might be invited by more than one clan. The money for the slain ram (dabiha) is collected from the heads of the families and called 'firda'-spread. The meal is cooked, each family providing its bread; meat and vegetables are provided from the 'common pot', and then they take their round trays to the guest house. The same happens with tea. Clan fellowship takes place during the night entertainments that are held

[1] In Silwa there is a strong connection between political authority and religious authority. This theme has been brought out clearly in E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, O.U.P., 1949.

'omda's house takes its place. All day long he is receiving 622
petitioners or travellers, unless he is going the rounds with 692
some official or inspecting his own fields. He pays frequent visits to the chief town of the district, either for business or for pleasure.

This uncontrolled system, though it has many advantages 692
for the Government, is full of drawbacks for the fellah, 578
abandoned as he is to a master who knows no more about administration than about justice. There are indeed exceptions, but they are as yet few. The system is also prejudicial to public security. Crimes may easily be concealed, or even foisted upon the innocent, by such an autocracy. Village feuds usually owe their origin and persistence to the rivalries aroused by this office.

At Nahyet el Barûd, in the *markaz* of Abu Tig, a new 622
'omda was to be nominated. Among the candidates for the 666
position two were outstanding, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Zeid and Sheikh Ahmed Farghali. One of these had been dismissed from the post by official action; the other, who had been *omda* in 1931, had also been dismissed by the Nessim Pasha Ministry. Both candidates were much feared in the district, and each had a large band of supporters. The committee which had to count the votes and then decide the election was formed of the *maamûr*, representatives of the neighbouring villages, and the *maazûn* of the village itself. However, the eligibility of the *maazûn*, as being a relative of one of the candidates, was challenged by the other. The authorities of the *markaz* then let it be known that the *maazûn* of another village would sit in his place. But on the day of the election, which was to be decided by a show of hands, it was seen that the first *maazûn* was still on the committee. His enemy's supporters objected, while his own friends upheld him, and the two parties came to blows. Worse than this, they made use of whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and a savage battle ensued. Before the police could intervene, three men had been killed and a number of others seriously wounded. The authorities arrested both candidates. The *mudîr* of Assiut gave orders that elections at Nahyet el Barûd and the neighbouring villages should be suspended until order was re-established (11th July, 1937).

Towards his superiors, whether officials or landlords, the 181
fellah adopts an attitude of awesome respect, of servility

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an '*omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an '*omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

[651 669]

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadúf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrízi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

47.

Sympathy.

×599 In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied.
351 In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarîm
[537] (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden.
Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri mal ʿal-fasʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḫaṭīye.
5 *Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḫwāti,*
abki beḥurʾa wed-demūʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
[461] And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
[609] The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
●[673] 5 "Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare
[801] the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmûds.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

155 guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition
152 to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes [674] of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out [188] to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

577 Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this [837] community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the [848] last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual [838] pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and [839] young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

887 Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems con-
885 nected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in
585 the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffirs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the
692 value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various
624 privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffirs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who
622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial,
692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*,
695 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con-
[681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffirs*.'

622 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine
692 up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

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181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
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'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrîzi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 466 671 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer subject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters. There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 636 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

[651 681 731 661]

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

[453]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

51.

Ingratitude.

×539
681

Eṣ-ṣāḥib illi ba'azz el-'ūt rabbēnâ,
minno gara 'ēb. Kābirna u-barrēnâ.
Kuturet 'iyūbo,
u-kull en-nās diryā-bo.
5 *'abbaḥ, rikibna maṭāyâna, u-ḥallēnâ.*

By the friend whom we brought up with the best of food,
By him evil was done. We were proud and did not punish him;
But his evil deeds increased,
And everybody heard of it.
5 He became insolent, so we mounted our camels and left him.

5. We relinquished the field of combat to him, rather than degrade ourselves by disputing with him.

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most
[582] natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnê 'ammi = "cousin"
[605] (masc.) and bintê 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 6.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris
[461] from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At
[857] our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the
[681] men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged)
[779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

000 Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 187 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

[627] [682] One of the customs that one would be glad to see die out in Egypt is the blood-feud. As far as I can gather from scholars acquainted with the ancient history of the country, this custom does not seem to be a native one. I fancy it must have been introduced [177] into Egypt at the time of the Arab conquest. It is a very terrible custom, and one that will be very difficult to abolish, for many of these family feuds have persisted for several generations, and still [411] continue with no sign of abatement. The weapons used in con-

[509]

FIG. 59. CROWD PULLING THE ROPES TO RAISE THE SUNKEN VESSEL

[411] nexion with blood-feuds are often the same as those used in inter-village fights, though firearms are sometimes employed. The rule is, so I was told, that the murderer, or a member of his family, must be killed by the avenger with exactly the same form of weapon as he (the murderer) used, and, if possible, on the very spot where the murder to be avenged was committed.

One day, as I was riding through the cultivation, an Egyptian friend of mine who was with me pointed to a certain place in the fields where a man had lately been strangled by a large handkerchief being tightly knotted round his throat. Shortly afterward, my friend told me, vengeance was taken by a member of the victim's family, who killed one of the murderer's relatives in the same way

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE LAW OF REVENGE

and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. [312] [685] [241]

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

775 explosion is heard regularly every midnight, but no attention is
682 now paid to it, as everybody has got quite accustomed to it.

Very shortly before my visit to the village in which the above-mentioned events took place a man was murdered in the adjacent fields, and not long after my arrival the following incident occurred. A woman was walking from this village to another not a great distance off, carrying bread and eggs to two of her grandsons who were at school there. She was alone, and as she approached the spot where the murder had taken place she saw a man who seemed to be ill, and who kept on crying, "*Akh! akh! Yā abūi! Yā abūi!*" ("Alas! alas! O my father! O my father!"). She went up to him and caught hold of his hands, raised him up, and then walked on with him, trying to comfort him. But after walking a short distance with her the man suddenly disappeared. She thereupon was terrified, and wept with fear. A man who was on his way to the same village overtook her, and, seeing her distress, asked her what was the matter. She told him about the stranger whom she had found and had tried to comfort and who had so mysteriously vanished. The man told her not to be frightened, that it was nothing, and that the apparition had appeared to him in the same way. It is generally supposed that this mysterious weeping apparition is the ghost (or *ʿafrīt*) of the man who had been murdered.

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken
186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate
186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation
579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered
186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried
● 682 his exactions too far; and is killed with public approval, the
609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the
579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (14).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the
577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

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It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

(Ḥasan Aghā) seizes this opportunity and smears a pebble 752
(which he had previously prepared [p. 43] with the help of hospital servants or surgical attendants) with the blood of the patient. After certain exertions and the display of a little effort (to complete the deception) he hands over to the patient the stone moist with blood. This is the method of Ḥasan Aghā who obtains enormous wealth in return for his fatigue and service on behalf of the Egyptian world. For his easy circumstances are due to many ignorant folk who are in a worse state than beasts of burden since there is no value in life or health among them. But it is a pity that Ḥasan Aghā 682
is to-day (June, 1894) engaged in prison, since the Government arrested him and the hand of Justice took revenge on him for killing one of the patients in his agency. Do not ask about what grief the people of those parts had when they suffered their famous "surgeon." We wish the excellent Aghā, aforementioned, a good life in penal servitude at Ṭurra[1] and we hope that Allah will inspire his devotees with intellect to guide them aright thereby, when the calamities of diseases afflict them.

XXVI

THE INJECTION WITH "THE BITTER TOY"

For long we have heard from people about extravagances 757
in the matter of injection, and that it produces fat in those who are lean and slender. When we asked certain people as to the composition of the substances entering into the injection they answered that that was the knowledge of the womenfolk. [p. 44.] Allah decreed, however, that a certain woman of Cairo came to indicate to me one day what it did to her daughter who complained of the flow of blood with the feces and violent dysentery. So I asked her concerning the cause. She hesitated a little; then she said: I went to an "old wife" famous for injection in order that she might attend to my daughter because she was lean. She produced "*the Bitter Toy*" (*al-la'ba al-murra*) and boiled it in pig's grease for half an hour, and then placed it in a metal syringe, and bade me hold the

[1] [A well-known convict establishment near Cairo. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

him was that of cousin-uncle, and I used to call him Uncle Mahmoud, 159
which he used to appreciate very much.

Mahmoud is the eldest and head of a family of four brothers and a half-sister, as well as a cousin living together with them. Only one of the four brothers is a full brother of Mahmoud, the other being half-brothers, while the cousin is from the paternal side, and is also the half-brother (uterine) of the other two from their mother.

Mahmoud himself was first married to his cousin, whom he divorced after having a daughter from her. He remarried, but only one daughter has survived from his second wife, and the death of his son at the age of three was due, as he thinks, to the sorcery of his first wife. Two years after the death of his first wife, her daughter was married to Hassan, Mahmoud's cousin: there is one son. One of his brothers is married to a close relative of Mahmoud's wife, and all the brothers at present are married and work together, although recently two of them went to live in new and separate houses. Before the last two brothers married, all of them were working on their land as well as three acres they usually rent. More than ten years ago one of the brothers went off to work in Cairo as a domestic servant, and since then he has never settled in the village, but pays visits occasionally to see his wife and family.

None of the brothers is literate, except the youngest, who had been conscripted into the army and has there learned to read and write as part of the army's literacy campaign for conscripts. After completing his service he volunteered as a lorry driver in the army, where he works now, leaving his wife and a small boy under the guardianship of his brother, Mahmoud.

Returning to Mahmoud himself, he worked as a farmer until the age of thirty, then he became the head of the village police (ghafeer) and this job seems to have given much scope for his pride and energy. He would usually talk about the order he maintained in the village while he was occupying that post, and emphasize the fact that everybody respected and even feared him. He was dismissed from this post after he had struck [683] ●
someone in a fight, and for this offence he was imprisoned for eighteen months.

During his work as head of 'ghafeers', Mahmoud related with great pride that he managed to prevent the women from going to fill their jars [626]
from the Nile on account of certain rumours which had spread in the village about their behaviour along the agricultural road, and this temporary action from his side was met with general approval. It also befell him to carry out the wishes of the preacher from the city, to prevent women [178]
from following the bier of the deceased as mentioned in the chapter on social change. He added that, after his time, women reverted to their old practice.

Mahmoud goes to town now and again on business, but, apart from such interruptions, he spends most of his time in the village tending to his farm. Three years ago, one of his half-brothers had a disagreement with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together. 684

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin. 597 181 683

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised. 181 597

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change." 562 593 [554] [606]

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ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live (").

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'îd is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, *considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up.* If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellīḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a woman has recourse when trouble arises between her and her husband. This is evidently a deeply rooted custom, for in the *Complaints of the Peasant*, a literary work of the Herakleopolitan Period (*c.* 2445–2160 B.C.), the peasant flatteringly describes the High Steward Rensi, to whom all his nine petitions are addressed, as "the brother of her that is put away."[1] Unfaithfulness in a wife was evidently punished with death in ancient[2] as it is in modern Egypt. Within the last year or two a case came to my knowledge of an unchaste girl being burned to death by her father and other male relatives, an act that may be compared with the burning of the faithless wife of the chief lector Ubaoner in one of the stories in *King Kheops and the Magicians*.[3]

The love of son for mother, of which I have spoken on p. 45, was evidently as strong in ancient Egyptian families as it is to-day. The following injunction of the sage Anii to his son in respect of his mother bears a striking resemblance to what my friend (p. 45) said to me about his own mother:

> Double the bread that thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried [thee]. She had a heavy load in thee, and never left it to me. When thou wast born after thy months, she carried thee yet again about her neck, and for three years her breast was in thy mouth. She was not disgusted at thy dung, she was not disgusted, and said not: "What do I?" She put thee to school, when thou hadst been taught to write, and daily she stood there . . . with bread and beer from her house. When thou art a young man and takest to thee a wife and art settled in thine house, keep before thee how thy mother gave birth to thee, and how she brought thee up further in all manner of ways. May she not do thee harm nor lift up her hands to God, and may he not hear her cry.[4]

The modern Egyptian women closely resemble their ancestors in their love of personal adornment, though, to be sure, the jewellery of to-day, particularly the earrings and bracelets, are less massive than they were, at least in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The bead collars worn by many of the modern peasant women are very much like those that the women are depicted as wearing in paintings and reliefs of all periods.

Tattooing (pp. 50 ff.) may have been practised in the predynastic age.[5] But that this method of personal adornment was

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 161 and note 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 25 f.
[5] J. Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London, 1905), pp. 23, 30.

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [601]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181
In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183]
ignorance and tyranny. (**)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521
mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831
how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524
with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857]
animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684]
fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735
to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183
home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771
beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183
They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771
wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812
It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437
no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (**) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [848] [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery committed by a woman was punished with drowning down to a [684] short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Musulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

181 Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposi-
157 tion may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder.
One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village
578 in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because
685 he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The
152 moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

152 One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy,
181 which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

[172]
[133]

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

181 Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgive-
578 ness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. [312] [685] [241]

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are
before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated
by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*),
meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are
required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide
the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 423
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 241
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated 312
from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck [427]
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village
quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's [598]
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for [665]

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423 instance, thinks he would like to add to his own property by
578 stealing a portion of his neighbour's he will surreptitiously shift
685 his boundary stones farther on to the adjoining land. This is, of course, quickly detected by the man whose land has been encroached upon, and a bitter dispute will follow, which may end in a violent quarrel.

407 The plough which is in common use at the present day is a
231 primitive, but quite adequate, machine (Fig. 97). It is made en-
241 tirely of wood, with the exception of the share, which is tipped with iron. It is generally drawn by oxen, but in Upper Egypt I have seen more than one plough with a camel and a donkey yoked together, a somewhat incongruous pair! The peasant follows on foot, guiding the plough, and usually singing as he works. Except during the inundation

[533] FIG. 97. A PLOUGH AS USED TO-DAY

[961] the work in the fields is incessant, for, owing to the very fertile
[134] soil, one crop can follow another in quick succession.

The watering of the fields is very strenuous work, the commonest
241 machine used for this purpose being the *shādūf* (see Fig. 13, right,
312 and Fig. 108), a primitive water-hoist. It consists of two upright wooden posts, or pillars, made of mud and *būṣ*, connected by a horizontal bar, across which is slung another bar, or a stout branch of a tree, weighted at one end with mud and stones, while from the other end is suspended a leather or basket-work bucket. The man working the *shādūf* pulls down this bucket into the water (either river or canal), and, when it is full, allows the weighted end to raise it to the level of the land. He then pours the water into a prepared channel, through which it flows in the required direction.

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smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be
injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 489
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the
incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

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787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291]
[342]
[352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE KORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently
[152] very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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Copts MR10

'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳandīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 786 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once ● 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

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MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property. 792 787 685

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true. 792 787

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour. 766

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. 792 766 787 755 [372] 842 [569]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success. 792 782 775 577

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fellaheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the 476 577
men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an '*omda* is in question, rival 578
parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family 579
from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some [685]
trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoossa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, 609
one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, 152
trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from 181
fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest 411
the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into 578
two camps over the selection of an '*omda* — the friends of 622
Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the 666
other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about [683]
his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds 683
of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of 579
the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is 181
neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is mild and 183
peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come.

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through 181
the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist 152
that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as 577
from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts 578
on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, [685]
a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A [683
friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, 426]
or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing.

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he 579
will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can 181
lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano 578
which will erupt when least expected.

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs 181
from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up 183
to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land 578
are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 562

they thought that the Jinn had killed one of the party, so they began shouting and weeping and bemoaning in a most heart-rending manner. It so happened that the fugitives wandered from the path, and their imaginings drove them into a sheep-fold, in which were the sheep belonging to one of the fellāḥīn. As soon as they entered this enclosure the sheep were scared because of them; but they thought that they were devils, and this groundless imagination was fixed in the minds of some of them to such an extent that they fell upon the ground motionless as if dead. Others began scurrying over the ground; and while the rest were scaling the walls, one of them turned behind him and saw two rams butting each other. He thought they were killing one of his companions who had fainted in the middle of the pen. So he cast himself from the top of the wall to get away from that revolting sight, and fell into a worse and more revolting state, namely, by smashing his legs and his hands.

As for the fraternizing Shaikh, he had taken the opportunity of the emptiness of the house, and he and his servant had stolen the ornaments and garments therein, before they both went outside, fuming and raging at the shamelessness of that person, the jeerer, who was deserving of the anger and displeasure of the Jinn.

Strange to relate when the mistress of the house on the following days perceived the loss of her jewels, she praised Allah, and thanked Him, that the Jinn had not taken anything else. "What would I and my children have done," she said, "if the Jinn had abducted me?" And such absurdities are still remembered and handed down by people who believe in their authenticity.

XII

[p. 33.] SAND DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-RAML)

MOST of those engaged in this are Sudanese. One of them will seat himself in the middle of a road near the wall of a house,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

799 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [264] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

799 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113. [4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

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he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-'Azab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *kibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

613 ten pounds; otherwise the 'Amareen have to pay the sum of ten pounds.
627 The payment of money actually takes place, but it is always given back to the payer as 'Arab-coffee' and there is no appeal beyond this stage.

623 The Arab council is the traditional agent for maintaining law and
627 order in the village, and its composition and functioning reflect the traditional concept of authority. Prestige derived from age, experience, and sobriety combined with power attached to landowners and heads of large
[554] families who are well known for their hospitality, are the main qualifications for selection in these councils. Although these principles are not rigidly adhered to in the village itself, they are more observed in composing
[628] a council to arbitrate in a dispute in another village. Like Chan Kom, Silwa conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility. As in Tepoztlan, government is ideally a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and able to give benefit to all, but with lesser men taking lesser places.[1] These Arab councils vary in their composition according to the gravity of the issue. They are formed frequently and spontaneously to settle disputes, but their proceedings are almost uniform.

627 Women have similar gatherings for settling feminine disputes, but they are less formal and lack that atmosphere of solemnity that prevails in men's councils. Men's councils, however, could be convoked to settle women's conflicts creating disruption between two houses, and men are expected to plead the case of the women concerned and undertake the responsibility of making them abide by the council's decision.

In the arguments that take place in these councils, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the mediators appealing to the kinship idioms to minimize the insult or the loss, or the accusers to exaggerate the offence. 'If my cousins, or brothers do so and so, how would others treat me? . . .'

623 It is also worth noticing that these Arab councils are held irrespective of
627 civil law procedures. In the case of attack on somebody, or damage to fields or animals, the Arab council has to be formed to smooth the relations
692 between the disputants. The norms and procedures of Arab councils are accepted by common consent as the basis of law and order as distinct from legalistic ways. To appeal to a remote and impersonal power vested in the local or national government is not a socially acceptable procedure, as any dispute should first be discussed by the people involved as well as those who mediate between them. My informant, Ali, regretted the fact that people do not nowadays accept reconciliation according to Arab council verdict, as they used to do; and much recourse is made to legal courts by 'brother against brother' and even father against son.

623 It is also evident that these Arab councils perform a very useful psycho-
627 logical function. By airing disputes, and transferring the offence from one circle to another in the Arab council, aggression is dissipated and diffused.
[154] In settling damages in Arab councils, the amount has to be fixed by the gathering, but it is shameful not to return the compensation (awad) which should be declined. By saying 'Wash Compensation' one says 'I'm a better man'.

[1] Robert Redfield, *A Village that chose Progress*, p. 165.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *'omdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffîrs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 692 624 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffîrs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who 622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial, 692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*, 695 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con- [681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffîrs*.'

622 692 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

'omda's house takes its place. All day long he is receiving 622
petitioners or travellers, unless he is going the rounds with 692
some official or inspecting his own fields. He pays frequent visits to the chief town of the district, either for business or for pleasure.

This uncontrolled system, though it has many advantages 692
for the Government, is full of drawbacks for the fellah, 578
abandoned as he is to a master who knows no more about administration than about justice. There are indeed exceptions, but they are as yet few. The system is also prejudicial to public security. Crimes may easily be concealed, or even foisted upon the innocent, by such an autocracy. Village feuds usually owe their origin and persistence to the rivalries aroused by this office.

At Nahyet el Barûd, in the *markaz* of Abu Tig, a new 622
'omda was to be nominated. Among the candidates for the 666
position two were outstanding, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Zeid and Sheikh Ahmed Farghali. One of these had been dismissed from the post by official action; the other, who had been *omda* in 1931, had also been dismissed by the Nessim Pasha Ministry. Both candidates were much feared in the district, and each had a large band of supporters. The committee which had to count the votes and then decide the election was formed of the *maamûr*, representatives of the neighbouring villages, and the *maazûn* of the village itself. However, the eligibility of the *maazûn*, as being a relative of one of the candidates, was challenged by the other. The authorities of the *markaz* then let it be known that the *maazûn* of another village would sit in his place. But on the day of the election, which was to be decided by a show of hands, it was seen that the first *maazûn* was still on the committee. His enemy's supporters objected, while his own friends upheld him, and the two parties came to blows. Worse than this, they made use of whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and a savage battle ensued. Before the police could intervene, three men had been killed and a number of others seriously wounded. The authorities arrested both candidates. The *mudîr* of Assiut gave orders that elections at Nahyet el Barûd and the neighbouring villages should be suspended until order was re-established (11th July, 1937).

Towards his superiors, whether officials or landlords, the 181
fellah adopts an attitude of awesome respect, of servility

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
864 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

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Bil-amān, ya-lummē,
wa-la tuḍrub aṣye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana-smi Lēle?
5 *Rummān ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭarah eg-genēne.
Ana ma'ak 'and el-'aḍi
fi-hāza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe, [926]
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun. [192] [551]

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'aḍi (QAdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage. [693]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give [562] themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and on the exact site of the crime. Moreover, the same number of knots was tied in the handkerchief used by the avenger as had been tied in the handkerchief used by the original murderer. 627 682

On another occasion the train in which I was travelling stopped close to a certain village in Middle Egypt. I noticed that the place was in great commotion; crowds of people had collected in the streets, and there were two or three motors drawn up, evidently belonging to Government officials. In a palm-grove opposite the village were groups of people, mostly women, seated round objects covered up with black cloaks such as are often worn by the men. Presently my servant came to the door of my carriage to tell me what was the matter. His information, collected from various persons on the spot, was practically the same as what I was told later by the officials themselves. It seems that in the village in question there is a long-standing feud between two families, one of which is weak, the other strong. About eight months previously the strong family had fought with the weaker one, and had either killed or severely wounded—I forget which—some of its members. The weak family was not in a position to take immediate revenge, but bided its time, determining to retaliate sooner or later. During the night before my visit fifteen members of the more powerful family had been out in their fields, as water had been turned on for irrigation purposes. It is always necessary on these occasions to see that the water is conducted into the proper channels, and also that no one steals it by altering its course. The men thus employed were widely separated from each other, and during their watch they all fell asleep. The weaker family knew that this might well happen and so give them the long-desired opportunity of taking their revenge. A number of them, therefore, set off from the village at night, and, creeping up to their sleeping enemies, beat them so severely with *nabābīt* that those they did not kill outright they injured so terribly that they were not expected to live—I never heard definitely how many actually were killed, though one rumour, happily an exaggeration, I believe, put the number as high as twelve. [312] [685] [241]

The law of blood-revenge is one of the greatest obstacles to justice with which the police officials have to contend. It is most difficult to obtain evidence, because the witnesses know that, should what they say result in a criminal's conviction, his relatives will certainly take revenge. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that 627 694

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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criminals sometimes escape punishment, in spite of the skill and patience displayed by many of the officials in unravelling the mass of conflicting evidence. To this skill and patience I can myself testify, and also to the obstinate refusal of witnesses to give any incriminating evidence, for I have been present over and over again at criminal investigations.

However, we must not pass too harsh a judgment on the attempts of the villagers to frustrate the aims of justice. Even in England people would hesitate to assist the law if it were known that to give evidence against even the most depraved criminal meant almost certain death at the hands of the avengers. Foreigners who have little or no knowledge of the customs prevailing among the peasants are inclined to be too severe in their criticism of the Egyptian officials when they fail to obtain sufficient evidence to convict almost undoubted criminals. But English officials who have lived in the provinces of Egypt and in close contact with the people realize how difficult a matter this is. To my mind the wonder is not the number of crimes that go unpunished for lack of evidence, but the number of criminals whose crimes are detected and who are brought to justice.

181 and mistrust. He puts up with the cruellest treatment from them, and they, despising him as they do, whether they be Egyptians or foreigners, believe that such methods are a necessity.

181 A rich landowner of my acquaintance, an excellent fellow
565 at heart, declared: 'The fellaheen must be driven with the
694 lash.' A *mudiers* of the police who, as I entered his office, was raining blows on a man up for trial replied to my expression of astonishment: 'This is how you have to treat them. They are beasts.'

369 So great is the cleavage between town and country, between the still uncivilised fellah and the more or less Westernised townsman, that the gulf is neither narrow nor recent. In a private letter written three centuries before Christ these words are found: 'Do not take me for an Egyptian fellah.' Then as now the representatives of the town appeared in the village only to take their rents, or to levy the taxes due to the State [19].

121 We are not for the moment discussing the fellah's psychology; but it must be said in conclusion to this chapter that although he is much sought after as a taxpayer or producer he is still unknown as a man and neglected as a citizen.

565 The political and economic pyramid of Egypt bears down with all its weight on the fellah. The oligarchy at the top may have changed its form, but pressure at the base, that is on the fellah, has been little relieved.

His ignorance, his isolation, his bondage to the soil, prevent him from putting up any resistance to this crushing burden; and it is a burden which moulds his whole life.

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622 the post, by the law of 1895, unless he is owner of at least ten feddans. His appointment is usually preceded by rivalries which may turn into brawls, and followed by feuds that often end in death.

The *omda*, however, knows very well how to protect and even avenge himself, for he alone transmits information to the *maamûr*, and has sole charge of twenty or more night-watchmen (*ghaffirs*). Indeed, his chief duty is to ensure public security in the village and the surrounding country rather than to concern himself with improvements or with public health, to which he gives no more thought than those under him.

He represents his village district (*nahya*) before the *maamûr*, is responsible for any crimes committed in it which are reported, supports the *sarraf* in the business of tax-collecting, sees to the levy of men required for any given task, takes charge of the post and telephone, controls the carrying of arms, reports the outbreak of disease among people or cattle, and records births and deaths.

622 He is not paid by the Government, but apart from the
692 value of the prestige attaching to his office, he has various
624 privileges. He is exempt from taxation on five feddans, from forced labour, and from military service. This applies both to himself and to his sons. By custom, if not by right, the position of *omda* remains the privilege of one family. If the village is large and important, the *omda* is assisted by sheikhs, with whom he deliberates before giving his decisions. One of my pupils, the son of an *omda* in Upper Egypt, describes the procedure as follows: 'My father has 25 *ghaffirs* under his orders. From 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. they are on watch in the fields, with the exception of two who
622 remain on guard at the *omda's* house. If there is a trial,
692 it is conducted thus: The *omda* sits down in his *montaza*,
675 or outer garden, with a few sheikhs (men of some age and responsibility). The two disputants appear, and each gives his explanation of the matter. The *omda* gives his judgment, and tries to reconcile them. If they are not con-
[681] tent to abide by his decision, he locks them up in jail until the following day and then sends them to the *markaz* with two *ghaffirs*.'

622 An *omda* may imprison for 24 hours, and impose a fine
692 up to 15 piastres. There is no town-hall in the village. The

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

776 855 695 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say," God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own*."

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, *"Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!"* They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

241 262 HIBISCUS ESCULENTUS, Abu-l-'Abbas el Nabati, who visited Egypt in 1216, gives a clear description of BAMIA, which is cooked in salted water. MOLOKHIYA, TORCHORUS OTITORIUS, or Jews Mallow, is chopped fine [252] and cooked in oil to make a green, sticky soup. Both vegetables were known to the ancient Egyptians.

113 49. The figures are : Mgo 1.988, Ca 0.284, K 02.886. See P. Schrumpf-Pierron, LA TENEUR EN MINÉRAUX DE LA NOURRITURE DU FELLAH, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1932, pp. 153-75.

50. *T.*—See on this subject J. W. McPherson, THE MOULEDS OF EGYPT, Cairo, 1942.

51. See article on SURVIVANCES EGYPTIENNES by 'Abbas Bayoumi, on pp. 279-87 of the BULLETIN OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, which contains a comparison of magical texts.

51a. See Appendix A.

52. LES SURVIVANCES DE L'EGYPTE ANTIQUE DANS LE FOLKLORE EGYPTIEN MODERNE : Bosc et Riou, Lyons, 1929.

53. See note 50, also Elie Sidawy, LES FOIRES OU MOULEDS DE L'ISLAM : REVUE DU MONDE EGYPTIEN, 1921.

54. The name means "Breathing the Freshness". This [527] very ancient Spring feast falls on the Coptic Easter Monday and is always a public holiday.

55. The last three are called HALAWA SIMSIMIYA, HOMMOS and FUL SUDANY.

56. According to 1939 statistics more than 60% of the [696] crimes remain unpunished, the culprits having eluded discovery.

See LA CRIMINALITÉ EN PROVINCE, by Muhammad Mustafa el-Kolaly, in REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES, July 1940, pp. 20-29.

57. The INDEX TO PLACE - NAMES (Egyptian Government Press, Cairo, 1932) gives 14,166. Among them are 7,800 with the prefix 'EZBA, 150 with MIT, 180 with NAZLA, 933 with KAFR and 1436 with NAG'. These prefixes recall their origin. There are barely 4,000 actual villages (nahya).

58. See Lozach and Hug: L'HABITAT RURAL EN EGYPTE: Cairo, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age.

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay.

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced.

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1]

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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witnessed, and which is typical as there is hardly any variation in the form it takes. 585

A is a boy who had recently been rejected for military conscription, on grounds of poor eyesight; he is known to be a good farmer, and a great help to his father. He was the eldest son in the family and felt that his father delayed his marriage unduly as 'fathers usually get their first sons married as early as possible'. After he was rejected for conscription, this boy could no longer bear any delay. As the custom is, he sent 'messengers' to persuade his father to get him married, as 'everybody was telling him that it was high time he got married'. On the other hand, his father was reluctant; he was in a quandary whether or not to proceed with this project; he was apprehensive that the lad might not be so devoted to his work after marriage, yet he felt the time was ripe for getting his son married, otherwise the boy might at any time 'bring disgrace' on the family. The lad's last appeal to the father was through a messenger who pointed out to the father that if the necessary steps for marriage were not instantly undertaken, the boy might think of leaving the village to find some work elsewhere. The father gave his consent, realizing that he would have to get his son married: 'There will be more "baraka" if it is done soon.'[1] The actual preparations would start in a month's time, when the harvest was ready. 582 [702]

Now a dilemma of choice faced the parents, as there were two girls of marriageable age in the family; one was the daughter of the boy's maternal uncle and the other of the paternal uncle. It was partly because of the mother's influence, and partly because of the boy's personal inclinations that his parents decided to marry him to his maternal cousin. This affronted the boy's paternal uncle, as his daughter, according to custom, had precedence over that of the maternal uncle. This man asked the lad's father for an 'Arab verdict' on the matter, and a formal gathering of relatives and some neighbours brought apparent reconciliation between the two brothers. They all agreed that 'although the boy was to get married into his mother's family the oil was still preserved in the house (zaitakum fi baitakum) and that he was not marrying a stranger'. Yet this slight was not forgotten and caused some tension and vituperation between some of the paternal and maternal relatives during the celebration of the ceremony. [584] [578]

The date of writing the marriage contract was then fixed. The father of the boy and his relatives and friends went to the house of the girl's father asking for her hand for their son in the usual phrase of 'talbeen al gurb' (literally 'we desire to get closer to you'). Neither the boy nor the girl was present during this gathering for writing the contract. Before the contract was written, the registrar (maazoon)[2] enunciated the following, which was 584

[1] This remark of the father indicated his social obligation for the marriage of his son; its counterpart is for the son to accept his father's arrangement for his marriage.

[2] The 'maazoon' is a learned man who keeps the official register of marriage and divorce. He is officially appointed after an examination in the Koran and the Sharia; it is an unpaid job. [629]

O

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[188] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[100] examinations take place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed
[744] as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the
[153] New Testament.

[2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and
[183] purity.

[3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee,
[100] those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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159 in the Kuttab to improve his handwriting, as the maxim of the pious ancestors runs, 'good handwriting increases the clarity of truth'.

In the whole of Ali's life religion has meant much to him in terms of personal security. His need of recognition and for prestige is certainly satisfied by his knowledge of the Sacred Book and other sources of religious information. With his sensitive and shy nature he could not have integrated his personality except through this religious foundation. Moreover, Ali's subsistence resources have been secure so far as he is still dependent on his father and mother. At the end of every lunar month his older brother, Ahmad, carries Ali's family allowance of corn to the latter's house and no serious quarrel has occurred between him and his father or brother on these grounds. The harmony of relationship between Ali and his father's family could be also attributed to the fact that Ali still lives with his wife's people, who are about five hundred yards from his father's house, while his brother Ahmad lives in the father's household. Ali's father is about sixty-five years old, and is still a robust man, who works in the field, and is considered by his family as tight-fisted.

In contrast to his brother, Ali cares much more for his clothes and appearance in general, and this is one of the reasons his father sends him to deputize for him on various occasions. Moreover, while his brother has been a member of the 'Nakshabandi' mystic sect, Ali has never joined it, as his religious experience has been satisfied through his knowledge of the Koran and literacy, while his comparatively illiterate brother finds his satisfaction in the emotional ecstasy that is invoked by the repetitive rhythm of the mystic circle (zikr). Ali probably had not joined the mystic [593] order because his brother was already a member, and normally brothers are not found together in the Order. On asking Sheikh Hussein, who is the local head of the Order about this fact, I was told: 'Brothers do not come to the Order for the fear of the evil eye. Jacob advised his seven sons never to enter from the same door or follow each other; they should enter from different doors and always spread themselves.' Structurally, this is in harmony with the cultural values of hierarchy, order, and respect relations between brothers, as physical proximity between them in sitting or eating in public is not considered polite.

MAHMOUD

Mahmoud is illiterate, suspicious, and a proud man, so I had compiled his life history by asking him questions that would not arouse any scruples in his mind. He does not know when he was born, he remembers only that he just managed to escape the days of forced military conscription during the First World War, being two or three years younger than the eligible age.[1] This means that he is about fifty years old. My relation to

[1] These days are known in the villagers' language as 'assultah al askaria', when people from the village were conscripted to work on the military roads or as camp sentinels in Palestine during the First World War.

[902]

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

with no crumb. There are no public bakeries except in the towns, but every family bakes its own bread two or three times a week. In Upper Egypt the fellah's loaf is rather smaller, being about six inches across, though thicker. A labourer in the district of Armant told the author that he used to eat ten a day. 252 [265] 262

The ordinary food of the fellah, then, consists of bread, which he makes from maize of his own growing, and vegetables from the edge of his field, or others of poorer quality that his wife buys at the market, with the occasional addition of cheese, when not all the milk of the *gamoossa* has been sold. Briefly, he eats the cheapest products obtainable in the neighbourhood.

His diet is neither varied nor abundant. Does this mean that he is underfed? It is certainly the usual view. On the other hand, one authority (44) finds that the foods—and even the water — which make up the fellah's diet contain a normal mineral content. The work, health and physical strength of the fellah seem to confirm this opinion, yet the increase of pellagra, and the very high proportion (perhaps 80%) of recruits for military service turned down, would seem to prove malnutrition. 164 [167] 702

So the black soil, like the tongue in Aesop's proverb, is at once the best and the worst of things, giving the fellah both strength and sickness.

The mineral content of the food crops that it nourishes strengthens the men who eat them.

The germs and parasites which infect the sodden soil weaken the men who live on it and drink from it. [164]

From this interplay of natural forces, in spite of everything, a certain balance has been set up which has made the fellaheen a sturdy stock.

This is what justifies the view that the fellah's greatest affliction does not lie in lack of cleanliness, in disease, high mortality, or all the physical distress so far described, and to be further studied under the heading of housing. His real misery lies elsewhere. 164 515

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than 181
most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a 619
nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding.

During the first Great War the English recruited a native 702
contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the 464
Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to 619
be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt.

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between 702
the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is en- [164]
listed for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service.

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving home to join the army, the family receives condolences and [152]
abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi).

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is 702
not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even 426
a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time.

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The 702
fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbūḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the [173] adventures of renowned Arab heroes.

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbūḥ, ya 'Abbūḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbūḥ,
wummo warâ bitnūḥ,
wit'ūl: ya waladi,
5 *ya lābis ez-zaradī,*
sikkinetak ḫūṣa
fil-arḍē marṣūṣa,
ma raṣṣēhāš illâni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
5 O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: .... madfûse, ma raṣṣêhâš illâni, hence I translate: "bury".

[P. 68 is blank]

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, 361
barely visible, though always very compact. 133

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially 311
if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated 361
area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by 423
human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fellaheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all [721
the more so because in that troubled period plundering 685]
Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, re- 621
cruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was 651
essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these 656
reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, 361
such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and 161
lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to 361
several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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159 him and left him for Cairo, whereupon Mahmoud followed him to effect a reconciliation and the brother was persuaded to return.

A year ago he helped his cousin, who is not strong enough for farming, to open a small shop. The income from the shop as well as from farming is pooled by all the family, Mahmoud being the one who looks after the needs and requirements of all his brothers and their wives.

[755] Mahmoud is a great believer in the evil eye, and it was his practice to warn the writer against certain people by asking him to recite a 'Sura' from the Koran on passing them. He told the writer that he usually spreads on parts of his farm a handful of sand from the tomb of Saint Abu-Naggi, who lies buried on high ground, to ward off the evil eye. In this connection he related the following incident: once, a person well known for his evil eye deliberately passed by Mahmoud's farm and admired it. The same man later passed by his farm and admired his cow, which after that day gave blood instead of milk. As Mahmoud could no longer tolerate the envier, he seized upon the occasion of a funeral in the clan's guest house to which the envier belonged, and went to complain about him, holding a white flag and asking his clan to stop their kinsman from casting his evil eye on his land and animals.

Mahmoud is strong and healthy and takes special pride in the fact that the malaria epidemic did not touch him. He interprets this as evidence that his social intentions and dealing are genuinely good. And because of his health during the epidemic period, he used to visit and assist the sick, and since there were very few who could attend to the burial ceremony and prayers, he made a point of not missing any if he could manage it as attendance is a pious deed and God rewards it. He is also grateful to God [731] that he and his brothers managed to save their bread from the torrent that destroyed most of the village harvest in 1948. They all waded into the water, spending a whole night and morning in gathering their floating stacks of corn and removing them to the dry land.

In assessing Mahmoud's personality and position in the village, one must point out the structurally precarious composition of Mahmoud's family, consisting of half-brothers and a cousin. Yet his personality, together with the close relationship between the brothers' wives, has assured the unity of the family. This might also be due in part to the fact that none of the brothers has a grown-up boy, a factor that might tempt the father to work independently.

Mahmoud combines a conservative and unimaginative nature with extraversion and a great deal of self-confidence. Although he has been to town on frequent visits and occupied an official post, he has not altered his dress or accent in favour of town ways. His 'zabout', the outer garment, still has the long and wide sleeves that stretch at least three inches past the hand, his turban is a large one, and he is fond of carrying his thick stave on moving about in the village.

Mahmoud is a satisfactory example of the older generation of the village,

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger ;

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[652]

it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment [26]".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres [26]".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, [27] a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm [28], which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

part *berseem*, and part wheat for the winter. The *berseem* 427
is consumed by his cattle, the wheat produces 2½ *ardebs*, 243
selling at about L.E. 6, but the landowner keeps back L.E. 4 248
of this as the second instalment of rent.

The tenant then plants his maize for the *nili* crop on his two feddans, but before the harvest he must pay the balance of his rent (L.E. 2) to the owner, and can then take the maize for himself. In fact it is only the yield of this last crop which really belongs to the fellah and his family. After setting aside enough to feed his family, he sells what is left. If all goes well he may be about L.E. 6 to the good.

But all may not go well. If the crop has been poor, or 427
there was a blight, or the crop has been badly sold, the tenant 731
must still pay the full rent, as provided in Article 392 of the 656
Egyptian Civil Code. Ruin is the result. Sometimes (e.g. in the three years from 1929 to 1932) catastrophe has been so general that the Government has had to issue decrees for the reduction of rent in a proportion of 25% to 40% according to the date of contract. The State cannot always intervene, and owing to the keen demand land is rarely let except at high rents. The consequences for the fellah are frequently disastrous.

One unhappy tenant farmer, whose *gamoossa* had just 427
been seized, explained the situation to an inquirer in these 511
words:

"I hired two feddans at L.E. 12 apiece. On each I spent L.E. 5 in seeds, manures and so on, not to mention my labour, that of my children, and the help of my animals throughout the year. What is the result? One feddan yielded four *cantars* of cotton, which sold at L.E. 12. The other produced five *ardebs* of corn and seven of maize, which brought me L.E. 13. Out of this L.E. 25 I had already spent L.E. 10, so how could I pay my rent of L.E. 24? I had to sell the *gamoossa*."

"But if you only lose, why continue to rent land?"

"Because farming is the job I learnt from my fathers, and I don't know how to do anything else."

"But why rent land at such a high price?"

"Because the local landowners have conspired to keep the prices up, and the fellaheen do not know how to get them lowered."

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that creeps up from the soil from undermining the building. 342

The walls have few apertures, partly, again, to ensure stability, but also to protect the interior from heat and glare 342 by day, and against the cold and dangers of the night. 341 The doorway, which is about six feet high and three wide, is separated from the street by a shallow threshold. One or two tiny loopholes above eye level, measuring about twelve inches by eight, are the only other openings to the outside; and even these are stuffed up in winter.

This limitation of window space is due partly to the high price of wood. Egypt, lying in the sparsely wooded zone of tropical desert which stretches from India to the [137] Sudan, is poorly supplied with wood. The date palms, sycamores, and acacias that give shade to the villages are too precious to be cut down for beams, and would in any case be insufficient to provide all the doors and windows that proper hygiene would necessitate. The trunks of date palms are certainly used, but very sparingly, since such trees bring their owners P.T. 100 a year in fruit, branches and fibre. Imported wood (from Finland, Sweden, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.), though commonly used in the towns, is beyond the normal means of the fellah. The result is that the doorway very often contains no door, and the loopholes are almost always without either glass or woodwork.

Though wood is dispensed with as far as possible, for the roof it is essential. In Upper Egypt, where it never rains, some houses remain roofless; but this is exceptional, and as a rule the four walls are at least covered with foliage. Ill-squared beams, set two feet apart, serve as a support for the interwoven stalks of maize, cotton, or reeds, together with palm branches. To prevent this construction from rotting, it is covered with rough mats and plastered with a thick layer of mud-and-cinder. This makes a terrace, which is proof against showers and solid enough in summer [513] to support a roof-hut and the sleeping bodies of all the members of the household. The roof can be reached from outside by a wooden ladder or brick staircase; constant access is needed to the place where tools, grain reserves, fuel, and sometimes even poultry are kept.

The necessary habit of keeping dry brushwood and straw 372 on the roof is a frequent cause of fire, which, by reason of the 488 closeness of the houses, soon spreads to the neighbourhood 731

731 and to the whole village. A spark from oven orstove in
[372 the burning heat of summer is enough to bring disaster.
488] Village fires, by their size and frequency, constitute one of the plagues of the Egyptian countryside. Between 1926 and 1930 sixty-six places were destroyed in this way, and every year, especially between April and September, the Public Security Department has appalling damage to report. To give an idea of its extent, here are four incidents of recent years:

1. January 14, 1936. Village of Mit Yaish, in the Markaz of Mit Ghamr. "The fire spread with terrifying speed, ending in the destruction of 94 houses. Hundreds of fellaheen are homeless."

2. April 22, 1936. El Muassaga, in the Markaz of Hehia. "The fire spread to 43 houses, which were reduced to ashes, with all the cattle, poultry and foodstuffs they contained. Losses were estimated at L.E. 300. The enquiry has proved that the fire was started by a woman of the village, named Nefissa Hassan, who was cooking in her home. A few sparks fell on the brushwood on the roof, and with the help of the wind the fire quickly spread."

3. May 5, 1937. "A terrible fire broke out in Bakanîsh, in Dessûq Markaz in the Mudiriya of Gharbiya. Five hundred houses were completely destroyed; 14 people were burnt alive, and 13 others who were rescued are suffering from severe burns."

4. January 14, 1941. "Fire broke out in the village of Deir, in the Markaz of Toukh, destroying 217 houses, causing 20 deaths, burning crops and cattle, and leaving 400 families destitute. The cause was a woman cooking on the roof."

656 There is indeed a regulation which forbids 'the storing of
731 brushwood on the flat roofs of houses', and a "Committee for Fighting Fires in the Countryside". But no regulation or committee can stop the fellah from storing his fuel on the roof, unless he is given the means of storing it elsewhere. He is similarly advised not to sleep with his cattle, but if he left them outside they would be stolen, and inside there is so little room.

353 What use does he make of the space available? If we go inside, we shall at once notice the darkness and the smell, if not the fleas. The house consists of a single room, sixteen to twenty feet by ten or twelve. "When

594 From a fortnight after marriage until her first son is five
462 years old, the wife helps her husband in the fields, especially in the cotton season; but, unlike the Alawite peasant women for example, she never tackles heavy work.

462 More often she is busy at home; there is plenty to do,
562 for she mills and bakes, rears and milks the *gamoossa* and the
593 goat, looks after the fowls, prepares manure and fuel, sews, washes, and delouses herself in public.

She is free to come and go within the limits set by village tradition. She is not hidden from the menfolk like townswomen or the women of the middle class. She has to carry breakfast to her husband out in the fields, then return home with the *gamoossa's* dung, and fetch water several times a day. She must go to market to sell eggs, butter and poultry, and to buy oil and other things. Tradition and necessity outweigh the severity of the Koran.

The wife retains ownership of the furniture she brought on her wedding-day, and the money for what she sells. In this way she can save and even lend to her husband, which gives her a certain authority. If he maltreats her, she can go back to her father's house and impose her own conditions before returning — the gift of a dress, or a pair of ear-rings. She is less dependent on her husband than he is on her.

593 A year or two ago, when the men were being levied to
181 meet the flood danger, I heard a woman weeping. "Don't
● 731 take it so much to heart", I said. "They've taken your
231 husband off, but he'll come back."

"It isn't for my husband I'm crying, but for my lost *gamoossa*. Find me my *gamoossa*."

562 The *fellâha* retains her liberty and authority as long as
577 she is wise enough not to infringe the traditions; for then the man gets the upper hand again. She will die rather than let herself be examined or treated by a doctor. She may go out and gossip with the other women as much as she likes, but woe to her if she is found in the company of a man, or even alone in some unwonted place. If she goes wrong, her husband accuses her to her family. Then her
684 father, brother, or cousin must kill her. Such *crimes d'hon-*
577 *neur*, being commended though not established by Islam, are still frequent and are treated with indulgence by the courts. But the severity of the punishment is out of proportion not only to the crime, but also to the woman's education.

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them ([illegible]).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
466 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century ([illegible]). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
[651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
[453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1181, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the prefix of 'Sheikh'.

In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it.

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); As-Zarnuji, *Ta 'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta 'allum* (translated by C. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

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APPENDIX XII

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PASS-ALONG

I.Q.	Frequency		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	3	4
40–49	0	1	1
50–59	0	2	2
60–69	0	8	8
70–79	3	8	11
80–89	1	9	10
90–99	11	2	13
100–109	11	10	21
110–119	8	3	11
120–129	2	1	3
130–139	1	0	1

For the results of test I the following remarks may be made concerning the interpretive significance of its scores.

1. As far as this small group of thirty-one boys and girls (with an average chronological age of eleven years eight months for boys, and eleven years four months for girls) is concerned, the results fall below the average norm of intelligence compared with urban children on whom the test was standardized.

2. The distribution in the sample, however, roughly follows the normal distribution.

3. Comparing boys and girls, the latter tend to have slightly higher scores on the whole than the boys.

For the results of tests II and III one notes that:

1. Unless the sample of test I happens to be of low intelligence (an assumption for which there is no apparent justification except the small number) tests II and III appear to be better tests than test I. In these tests children, including the sample in test I, have scored average and even superior I.Q.s. In test III, especially in the case of boys, the curve shows a skew towards the superior I.Q. tendency.

3. Boys on the whole have better scores in these performance tests than girls. In the Porteus Maze test only three girls out of sixty-three are above the average (100), while thirteen boys out of sixty-four fall above the average. In the Pass-along test the area representing boys of average or above average I.Q. is larger than that of the girls.

It is to be noted here that one of the boys who is mentally deficient and could not handle the test problems of the performance tests at all, is called 'Shaikh' (saint) by the rest of the school children. Among the adults there

[732]
[808]

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Among the adults there are in the village four people who may be considered by psychologists as insane or mentally deficient but are regarded as possessing a 'saintly touch'. However, the use of these three types of intelligence tests tends to indicate, apart from the difficulty of sampling, that the children have an intelligence of the practical type. The nature of the performance tests is perhaps nearer to the problems of their serious activities of everyday life. On the whole they scored better in Pass-along than Porteus.

153 [134] [808] [158]

It is worth mentioning that some of the children who came out well in the performance tests did very badly with the verbal test, and this could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the children with the intellectual items of the latter. Apart from the mathematical items, this unfamiliarity could be demonstrated by item 8, Section 1. In it, the child is asked: 'If you want to give your mother a present what will you choose: a skipping rope, a toy, a silk stocking or a bicycle?' Although the obvious answer according to the test is 'silk stocking', which some children gave, others gave 'a skipping rope' or 'a bicycle' while none chose a toy. On asking a boy why he chose a bicycle, he answered that after giving it to his mother he would take it back for himself. Some of those who chose the rope thought that it was a useful thing for mother as she 'would hang the washing on it'. The difference of value-attitudes implied in such items and their influence on answers given, is similar to that classical example given by Klineberg with regard to one of the items of the 'National Intelligence Test' which was administered to some children of an Indian tribe. In this item the subject is presented with the words: crowd, closeness, danger, dust, excitement, number, and is asked to underline only two words which are the necessary characteristics of the crowd. Although 'closeness and number' are the correct answers according to the key of the test, yet many of the Indian children underlined danger and dust and in other cases excitement. According to their own logic and experience these answers seem to be the right ones.[1]

In our case the results of testing by a verbal test brings out the validity of applying tests standardized for urban children to rural children. By no means all the children who took the Kabbani test are mentally deficient, but the test itself is overweighted with items that are more suitable to city children, and may fail to sample adequately those abilities in which the rural children excel. In the United States and Britain studies of urban-rural differences in intelligence have revealed that rural children are neither uniformly nor consistently inferior to urban children on all tests.[2] Our small-scale testing tends to confirm the conclusion that while rural children score low in tests of abstract intelligence, they may excel in tests of the mechanical or practical type.

Although doubts could be cast on the quantitative results of tests that are not standardized for a particular community, such tests could be used

[1] Otto Klineberg, *Race and Psychology*, Unesco, Paris, 1951, p. 11.
[2] A. Anastasi and J. Foley, *Differential Psychology*, New York, 1949, pp. 823–7.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
715 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

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FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

769 rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who
935 appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began
431 again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets
[978] with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

769 In another part of Egypt where I have attended this cere-
775 mony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak saʿīd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭalaʿ*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3. [2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿĪd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
● 935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[769]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in
[782] her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿId el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation 272
between the increase in this "drug habit" and the develop- 312
ment of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved 164
that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into 249
Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was 439
forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in 276
the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day; at sunrise 264
before leaving for work (*futûr*); about 10 o'clock, in the 516
field (*ghâda*); and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the [445
open air and in company, each taking his food from the 271]
plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked 252
food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a 372
Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat 262
is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton [231]
or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, [735]
for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, 226
or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) 262
are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' 252
fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

Chapter VII

THE FELLAH AT HOME

On his return from the East in 1932, Christian de Caters spoke as follows about the houses of the fellaheen (*Echo de Paris*, 16.6.32): "I have seen the poorest villages of a Mancha in Spain, the hovels of the Cape Verde islanders, and the reed huts of the Lundas, a savage tribe in the depths of Angola, but nowhere have I seen greater distress than in Egypt."

On the other hand, Lozach, in *Le Delta du Nil* (Cairo, 1935), finds that the fellah's home is "not far behind the stone or mud huts with a thatched roof which are still common in many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is in any case far superior to the miserable hovels in which most of the peasants of Tunisia or Algeria live".

Which statement is one to believe? It all depends on the point of view and the standard of reference. Such comparisons are in all probability misleading, especially when the cases compared are not parallel. A personal impression or opinion is not so useful as an actual description of the fellah's home, and of his life in it. This will show us how far the house is suited not merely to the fellah but also to the land he works on.

We have seen the public parts of the village. Let us look now at the private dwellings of the fellaheen, without concerning ourselves with the big house belonging to the landowner or the residence of the *'omda*.

There are certain exceptions to be noticed first: —

1. Stone houses, which are found on the edges of the desert in Upper Egypt. The nearness of the cliffs makes it possible for the fellah to transport the stones for building in his basket. Some of these houses have a vaulted or domed roof.

2. Red-brick houses, without pointing, which are quite common in Lower Egypt. These presuppose a certain standard of living.

563 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
● 735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181
In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183]
ignorance and tyranny. (")

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521
mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831
how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524
with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857]
animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684]
fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735
to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183
home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771
beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183
They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771
wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812
It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437
no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (") *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

CONCLUSION

THE DISTRESS OF THE FELLAH

In comparison with the fellah's miserable lot a century ago or under the Mamelukes, his present situation is an undoubted improvement. He can no longer be killed like a dog, plundered at will, or commandeered as a slave. 178 511 735

In comparison with the woes of the negro, Malagasy, Chinese, or Tonkinese peasant, the fellah might seem even more fortunate. He is undernourished but does not die of hunger. He has clothes to wear, and, when holidays come round, money to spend on amusements. [171]

True, but there are two kinds of poverty. There is physical poverty, which means insufficiency of resources and a lack of the conditions necessary for the maintenance and development of physical health; and there is intellectual and moral poverty, which means ignorance and a lack of human dignity, no less essential to the life of the spirit. 735 185

Physical poverty has a more immediate effect on the worker and, precisely because it is more noticeable, arouses more pity. Hence all these efforts to improve the fellah's house, his health, and his finances. Hence also the habitual tone of his complaints, and of the speeches made about him. "This is no new question, but a subject that has figured in every Speech from the Throne since the beginnings of our parliament. We are not suffering from a diversity of evils, each of which can be treated separately, but from a single fundamental evil, and that is the low standard of life of the masses of the people in the countryside; a standard so low that it offends all human feelings, and stains the reputation of our country. The people of Egypt is not composed of those 160 or 200 thousand persons who are comparatively well off, but of sixteen million souls" (").

In this low standard of living we must also include moral poverty, which since it affects the very sources of human life 511 735

511 735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 212 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.

656 746 The greater number of official measures, for example, are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however, 747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [597]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735 ●

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

but in fact it has been influenced considerably both by the colloquial and by modern European languages. Conservatives attempt to maintain, and reformers to narrow, the wide gap which still remains. 191

73. MODERN EGYPT, by the Earl of Cromer : Macmillan, London, 1908. The second of the two volumes deals with the social condition of Egypt. 113

74. THE BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, by Ibrahim Rashad, Director of the Department of Co-operation in the Ministry of Agriculture : Government Press, Cairo, 1935 (in Arabic). The second of the two volumes deals with Egyptian practice.

75. See an excellent study in Arabic by Dr Sayyid Karim in the review EL-IMARA (*Architecture*), No. 11 for 1941, pp. 51-64 : VILLAGE REFORM : THE MODEL OR THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE ?

76. 'Successive Governments have spent L.E.14,000,000 to pay off debts on property, that is to say to save the big landowners, who do not number above 13,000. This means that these privileged persons have received an average of L.E. 1,000 each, which has been paid out by the Treasury on the pretext of maintaining agricultural prosperity. [746 735]

'The Government has this year allotted L.E. 17,000 to the establishment of social centres. This means that each poor fellah is to have half a piastre. If we add to this the expense of supplying drinking-water and free medical treatment, the sum set aside for the poor by the Government is no more than a few piastres a head.' (AL-INZAR, Minia, 3.3.1941)

77. Draft Budget for 1941-2, in the Annals of the Chamber of Deputies for April 1941.

See also: Ibnet ish-Shaty': THE QUESTION OF THE FELLAH : THE REFORM OF VILLAGE EDUCATION, DEFECTS IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, pp. 112-131.

Taha Bey Hussein : THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN EGYPT (1938), Vol. II, pp. 94-125 on ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Jacques Tagher : THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT (1942), pp. 59-63.

(The last three are all in Arabic.)

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[202] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" during Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[574] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street.
[735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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593 have to go to the fields they should not accompany each other, but should follow one after the other to avoid the effects of the evil eye. It is not considered 'polite' for married brothers to sit together at one meeting. Moreover, there is no joking relationship or greeting terms between brothers.

The relationship between sisters is mainly based on affection and mutual co-operation, but not necessarily that of solidarity as they are destined to live in separate homes after marriage. The same pattern of relationship obtains between brothers and sisters although married brothers are [586] socially responsible for their unmarried sisters. In the case of the sister's divorce, her brother is the guardian in the absence of the father. More often [136] than not, a widowed woman who has no sons, goes to live with her brother, and hands over to him her property that she inherited from their father.

595 The relation between consanguine brothers and sisters is supposed to be bristling with friction and jealousy. Though they are from the same father and carry his name, their mothers are called 'darra'-rivals; and hence they identify themselves with their mothers from the emotional point of view. Solidarity between consanguine brothers is not structurally expected as they are not nursed from the same breast. Uterine brothers are expected to be more affable and less quarrelsome with each other. This difference is partly intelligible when it is known that consanguine brothers inherit land and property from their father, while uterine brothers are 'screened' and do not inherit anything from the stepfather. However, 593 whether between half-brothers or full brothers, the expectation of friction [518] between siblings is widely held, and does actually occur, and is usually explained as an expression of their jealousy and rivalry. Apart from the motive of sibling rivalry to which reference will be made later, this friction between siblings could also be attributed to the absolute authority of the father. Jealousy of, and rivalry for the father's power, is suppressed and made acceptable by the possibility of gaining rewards of good behaviour both on social and religious grounds. Hence the father-son conflict is displaced to the brothers and sisters, who are in open rivalry for the father's favour and his sanctions and rewards. Moreover the methods of their early training, as will be discussed later, do not contribute to the suppression of rivalry; on the contrary, they stimulate and emphasize the value of rivalry in social behaviour.[1]

604 The relation between a boy and a girl and his or her paternal or maternal uncle reflects almost the same relationship pattern that obtains between children and their father and mother. The paternal uncle and aunt are expected to support the father in enforcing discipline and social sanctions. It is even said that the main responsibility in this respect lies on the uncle's shoulders, as the father might be inclined to be less firm, having particular love for his children. On the other hand, the maternal uncle and aunt are also the source of affection and pampering. Grown-ups can sit

[1] This explanation is based on a similar situation in the Tanala culture of Madagascar. Cf. Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society*, pp. 315–16.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. 159 [944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 77 164 761 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 687 648

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854 884 755 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders 755 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have 854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing 164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently [144] allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffering. [784] As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great [515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which 743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally 758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their 177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, 164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

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757 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of
114 boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no
123 exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232]
[241]

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate
743 medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

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time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (44).

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743 that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744 peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164 more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271 its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132] again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271 fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312 their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296 selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515] carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364] come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271 or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415 brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273 taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
361 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
291 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four
431 pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip. 178 642

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son. 641 177

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1] 641 [944] 655 641 [558] [119] [453] [456] [426]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands. 852 304

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment. [300] [534] [431] [949]

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent. [292] [152] [842]

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice. [262]

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree 852

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[188] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[908] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
● [744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the
[153] New Testament.

[2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and
[903] purity.

[3] Till 1948, sons of village sondas and sheikhs, those who paid £E10 exemption fee,
[900] those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. [159] [1944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [1988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [1938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [1955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [252] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are un- [744] methodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
882 necks of the hapless infants.
755

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is encouraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently
• [144] allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[784] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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757 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of
114 boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no
123 exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232]
[241]

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate
743 medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by 248
raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to 461
empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then 464
resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and press- [744]
ing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or [372]
cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering 243
about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (41). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare-744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (44).

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so 743
that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the 744
peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until 164
more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for 271
its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over [132]
again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the 271
fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If 312
their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve them- [296
selves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and 515
carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women 364]
come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, 271
or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha 415
brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a 273
taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

311
312
material is used, that is to say the nearest available earth. 361
Thus large holes have been created, which have been dug 516
deeper and wider, and have then filled up with water. These
are the *birkas* or village ponds, which serve as drinking- [515
troughs for animals, as swimming-pools for children, and 481]
sometimes as sources of water for the housewife.

The Government has had fifty-odd of these hotbeds of 164
disease filled in, not without meeting opposition from the 657
fellaheen, whose habits and customs have thus been disturbed.
Eighteen such ponds needed 10,000 cubic metres of earth.

Not far from the *birka*, still outside the village, is the 243
gurn, or winnowing and threshing-floor. This is a flat 251
patch of ground covered with cow-dung and earth, which has been levelled and trodden down. Its size is proportionate to the number of families that use it. The *gurn* is common property, and nobody can appropriate it. It is big enough for ten groups to work at a time, until all have winnowed their corn. It also serves as a public square for meetings, though often an adjacent piece of waste ground supplements it for this purpose. Not far away can be seen a great rubbish 364
heap made of dirt, dung and carrion. This heap would over- 744
top the houses, if the dogs and birds of prey did not come regularly to reduce it, and if the fellaheen did not take manure from it. It would be an even greater danger to public health than the *birka*, if the sun did not disinfect it.

Still outside the village, particularly in the Fayum 231
and in Middle Egypt, there may be square towers, as much as 343
thirty feet high, banded in black and white. Their heavy base, seven yards by four, gives them the appearance of forts, but they are in fact pigeon-cotes. You can see them assailed, at sunset, each by a cloud of from fifteen to twenty thousand pigeons coming back to roost after feeding among the fields. The construction of these "houses", requiring an outlay of from L.E. 200 to L.E. 300 each, is a specialised trade. It is beyond the means of our fellaheen, and can be undertaken only by an *omda* or big landowner. In the South a pigeon-cote is often built on a corner of the rooftop, thus raising the skyline of the village; but as a rule these houses with pigeon-cotes, whether built-on or independent, do not form part of the village itself. They stand apart, and can be distinguished by their extra storey, their more pretentious appearance, and their gardens. Such are the owner's villa on an *ezba*, or

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (7). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *kalâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

[651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghaffîr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

● 744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

weekly fair, stores for wood, manure, and grain, and a fire station. Twenty thousand people are to live in this paradise, which will cover 45 feddans. The plan has not yet been carried out ([illegible]). 654 341 361

A single model village in the middle of a vast area is a drop in the ocean. Few people can either benefit by it or copy it. It would be better to spend the money on more useful projects such as supplying the villages with drinking-water. The benefit would be more wide-spread, say the advocates of this policy, and avoid the injustice of creating inequalities among villages. Why should one be chosen for a model, and others remain in their old squalor? A five-year plan was suggested for rebuilding the four thousand villages of Egypt at an estimated cost of thirty million pounds. This sum appears both moderate and feasible, when it is remembered that the Egyptian Government has spent forty-five millions on dams and irrigation work. The plan was given up, however, on account of the heavy expenses incurred under the Treaty of 1936, and perhaps also owing to the lack of public spirit ([illegible]). 653 654 657

The Commission set up for the reform of the medieval system of *'omdas* and for the betterment of conditions in the countryside has proposed the establishment of municipal councils in which the fellaheen should take part. There are already such bodies in existence in about sixty townships. They are composed of the Mudîr or the Mâmûr, the Inspector of Public Health, four elected members, and others nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

Another institution, as yet not much developed, is that of the Village Councils, which were begun in 1918 and now operate in about seventy places. Their composition is similar, but their financial scope is very narrow. These bodies are limited in their activities to the watering of the principal streets (which does not do away with the mud), the construction of small public gardens (in which nobody may walk, for fear of spoiling them), and the erection of a few street lights. They might well be more representative of the village. Even if the *'omda*, instead of being nominated, were elected by his fellow-villagers, would that give him civic ideals? Specialised officials might be appointed to the village, such as a doctor, a visiting nurse, an agricultural expert, and a trained social worker. Or should the first aim be 623 744

744 to provide public conveniences, in the effort to combat the diseases which lessen the fellah's output ? The Ministry of Public Health, founded in 1934, has given this question priority in its programme, but it has not a large budget, and most of its income goes to pay the salaries of its officials. It has, however, some genuine achievements to its credit. Sixty-seven dispensaries, permanent or travelling, are fighting bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. There are as many hospitals, with about four thousand beds in all, for serious illnesses. In 1936 there were 111 eye-clinics, which had treated 1,133,599 patients. Infant welfare is organised in some forty centres. Doctors, midwives, and visiting nurses, instead of waiting for the peasant woman to come and ask for help, go round from house to house to give treatment and advice. At least half a million visits have been made. By 1937 there were about five thousand certified midwives, who had taken a six months' course in a maternity hospital, and eight thousand of the second class, who had from three to six weeks' training.

744 747 To these splendid efforts must be added the even more devoted labours of private institutions : the dispensaries and home visits of the Franciscan Sisters of Egypt and the many other Catholic sisterhoods, the Protestant foundations, such as the C.M.S. and the American Mission, and the more recent and methodical 'social centres' established in a dozen villages in the Delta.

It is a vast field, and these efforts up to the present have affected only thousands out of millions. Even those fortunate few often lose the benefit of their medical treatment through their ignorance, their unhygienic habits, and their poverty. These are the obstacles to progress.

183 744 A model village has no power to make the fellah a healthy man, immune from sickness. The work of the authorities in the provinces is hardly more succesful. So long as the fellah keeps his present ways of thought and the ignorance that hinders him from knowing what is good for him and what is not, he will remain, in spite of all the improvements that are offered him, exactly as he is today. He will refuse [271 356] filtered water and drink the impure water his fathers drank. Give him a light, airy, healthy dwelling, and he will pervert it to his own manner of life. He will still be unable to 183 profit from the laws and institutions provided to help him.

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and concrete at L.E. 120 each, has arranged for a dentist and
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ant for social work. This young Egyptian woman, the
first to hold a diploma from the Alexandria School of Social
Service, lives not in the owner's villa or the *nâzer's* house
but among the fellaheen and close to the school, in a little
room which she has fitted up charmingly. At 8 a.m. she
opens her dispensary, and at 9 a.m. pays a medical visit
to the school. Then she makes a round of the houses,
gently discouraging dirt and disorder. She keeps a card-
index of each family, and records its progress. She brings
the girls together for lessons in child-welfare and sewing,
and in the evening assembles the men to tell them stories
and teach them how to amuse themselves in their spare time.

At the end of the first year, thanks to the fact that this
service was continuous and close at hand, the women of the
'ezba were washing themselves once a week, though they
used only to take a bath once a year. This is because Doreyya
did not make speeches to them about bath-tubs and shower- [515]
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at hand in her home, the *tisht*, the *halla* and the *kûz*.

Then there is the earlier example of a remarkable 747
ab'adiya (isolated farm) in the *mârkaz* of Simbellawain. 361
This 400-feddan estate, worked by direct cultivation, has
been made by its *nâzer*, an Alsatian of good peasant stock
who has been living and working there for twenty-seven
years, into a paradise of order and health. The fellaheen are
lodged in thirty-six small houses varying in size according [342]
to the number of children. They are built of red brick, with
wooden roofs. The inside is newly white-washed every
year. Nothing is kept on the roof, but each family has an
adjoining patch of land, defined by an imaginary line, where
dry brushwood and manure are heaped. Nobody encroaches
on another's space. The labourers are paid three and a
half to four piastres more than on neighbouring estates. [311
They are each allowed one or two feddans for their require- 241]
ments of maize or berseem, and almost every family owns a
donkey and a goat, and either a calf or a *gamoossa*. Once [291
a year everyone receives a new garment at the owner's 431]

113

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [515 526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463 435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

164 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIḲḲA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

511
735 is of graver consequence for the individual than for the group. In this poverty the fellah is too rich.

181 His ignorance and backwardness, his churlishness and servility, which contrast so strikingly with the refinement of the upper classes, are more tragic than his lack of means.

The fact that he does not feel the depth of his suffering is no reason why it should seem any the less degrading. On the contrary, when he feels it more keenly and becomes fully conscious of it, his deliverance will be on the way.

184 The real evils, then, are the fellah's lack of education
212 and culture, and the incomprehension or inaptitude, if not
656 scorn and indifference, of those who might be helping him.

746 The greater number of official measures, for example, are thought out in offices quite remote from the fellaheen, and put into practice by officials who have nothing of the countryman in them. Whether they are concerned with health or education, agriculture or justice, they spring more from theory or from imitation of other countries than from a practical knowledge of the true state of affairs. Their starting-point is not the way of life and thought of the fellah, but a preconceived ideal. They are too interfering, and are imposed on the fellah in a hard, threatening manner. They are planted on him from outside, without ever arousing his interest or enlisting his help, so that he is unable to believe that the Government is genuinely trying to do him a service. And his distress remains the same as ever.

Here lies the explanation of the amazing series of failures which makes the pessimists say "It is no use doing anything for the fellaheen". Experience shows, however,
747 that private organisations of limited scope and resources, because they are working *with* the fellah and not merely *for* him, because they advise instead of commanding, and promise instead of threatening, have been able to gain his confidence, and in spite of unavoidable false starts have achieved excellent results.

One example is the model village of the Royal Agricultural Society, mentioned in the previous chapter. The finishing touch was put to this in December 1941 by the establishment of a 'Social Centre'.

Another case is the happy experiment tried on a large *'ezba* of 1600 feddans in Beheira, where the landowner, a

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

but in fact it has been influenced considerably both by the colloquial and by modern European languages. Conservatives attempt to maintain, and reformers to narrow, the wide gap which still remains. 191

73. MODERN EGYPT, by the Earl of Cromer : Macmillan, London, 1908. The second of the two volumes deals with the social condition of Egypt. 113

74. THE BOOK OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, by Ibrahim Rashad, Director of the Department of Co-operation in the Ministry of Agriculture : Government Press, Cairo, 1935 (in Arabic). The second of the two volumes deals with Egyptian practice.

75. See an excellent study in Arabic by Dr Sayyid Karim in the review EL-IMARA (*Architecture*), No. 11 for 1941, pp. 51-64 : VILLAGE REFORM : THE MODEL OR THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE ?

76. 'Successive Governments have spent L.E.14,000,000 to pay off debts on property, that is to say to save the big landowners, who do not number above 13,000. This means that these privileged persons have received an average of L.E. 1,000 each, which has been paid out by the Treasury on the pretext of maintaining agricultural prosperity. [746 735]

'The Government has this year allotted L.E. 17,000 to the establishment of social centres. This means that each poor fellah is to have half a piastre. If we add to this the expense of supplying drinking-water and free medical treatment, the sum set aside for the poor by the Government is no more than a few piastres a head.' (AL-INZAR, Minia, 3.3.1941)

77. Draft Budget for 1941-2, in the Annals of the Chamber of Deputies for April 1941.

See also: Ibnet ish-Shaty': THE QUESTION OF THE FELLAH : THE REFORM OF VILLAGE EDUCATION, DEFECTS IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, pp. 112-131.

Taha Bey Hussein : THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN EGYPT (1938), Vol. II, pp. 94-125 on ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

Jacques Tagher : THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT (1942), pp. 59-63.

(The last three are all in Arabic.)

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[747 361 291 431] expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 515] Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk [346 794] of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[759 743] Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 181] When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five 747
young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (*). 872
"Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village.

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's [757]
and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist. On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash.

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but [524]
it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules."

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, 747
and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts

F 747 to be humane. This is shown by a growing number of articles in the Egyptian Press, as well as by, for instance, a recent film-production entitled *Asifa 'ala-l-Rif* (Storm over the Village), which deals courageously with the problem of the fellah and his masters.

E F 565 747 It is none the less clear that the educated classes have neglected their responsibilities. They have turned away from the masses and devoted themselves to politics, literature, or European travel. They have been self-centred or, as some would say, unpatriotic enough to keep their culture and their wealth strictly to themselves. It is true that every now and again from their ivory tower they have commended enthusiastically the earthy qualities of the fellah, but they have never done much to help him. The occasional meetings of the governing classes with the fellaheen have something theatrical about them, and what is theatrical is obviously not real.

E F 747 184 A member said lately in the Chamber "In this country, when a Prime Minister visits a village, he is accompanied by an escort of some three hundred soldiers, not to mention officers and high officials. Under such conditions he cannot get into touch with the people of the place or find out what they really need" (**). The honourable member went on to suggest that ministers should find out for themselves the true state of the people.

F 183 185 748 Thus the fellah, like a neglected child who grows up without thinking or learning anything, has remained rooted to the ground. The earth has stopped him from sinking yet lower ; it has preserved and sustained him, but it could not elevate him. The essential need of the fellaheen is to be awakened and revived to their heritage of humanity.

This is the task of the upper classes, and especially of those who are most concerned with the land : landowners, agricultural engineers, and all who live in the country or visit it in the course of their work, such as merchants, bank-employees, and Government officials. These people should no longer confine themselves to economic administration or political relations with the fellaheen, but should also make an effort to create disinterested human contacts. This is the only way to do any good. It is noticeable how much encouragement the fellaheen derive from the simplest of visits to our village schools by notables or townspeople,

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provided these show real cordiality and interest and have 183
come to see the fellaheen for their own sake. 185

The same task belongs, by virtue of their very function, 748
to teachers and ministers of religion, who enter more deeply into the life of the village. Whoever assists them in their work shows the most intelligent form of patriotism.

The wives and daughters of landowners are also specially called to this task. One young girl of good family who spends her holidays in the country and is sensitive to the people's needs has been able quite alone to gather all the fellaheen of the '*ezba* and, by telling them stories every evening, to [538]
educate them and generally raise their standards. This is true feminism at work.

The essential problem, then, is to undertake and carry through a task of education and enlightenment, which is more a matter of personal understanding and personal service than of committees, speeches and official decrees.

The only thing that can awaken without exciting, help without weakening, free without uprooting the fellaheen is a socially-minded and altruistic spirit in the upper classes. It is from above that a beginning must be made.

There could be no fitter conclusion to this book than a quotation from the great Pope Pius XI ([1]):

"Your duty is to afford the worker both material and 121
spiritual help : material help, by so acting that not only legal justice may work on his behalf, but also social justice; that is to say, that he may benefit from all those institutions that have as their aim the betterment of the conditions of the working classes : spiritual help, by giving them the aid of religion, without which they will live immersed in a brutalising and degrading materialism .... There are millions of human beings living in conditions so pitiful and so wretched that they do not even enjoy the minimum of well-being necessary for the preservation of human dignity."

[page 160 is blank]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [951]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

> 'Who supports his father
> except him who descends from his loins.
> May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
> and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

> 'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
> and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [183] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [076]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [182] [055] [082]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865 is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858 pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865 mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593 is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152 sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [151] two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865 tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593 old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152 that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg ?55 fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154] a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154] children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 782 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *karīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise. [276 424]

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

THE MUSHĀHARA

This is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

This should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the abovementioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥin of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar el-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

778
751

MODERN AMULETS

Two stamped leather amulets of the kind used in Egypt to-day as prophylactics.
(By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

Facing p. 27.

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22]. [164]

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 176
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḥīḥ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce*; and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

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XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

776 855 695 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say," God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

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757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 751 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [756] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [789] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A. formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance!)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḥrāṣ*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [848] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

773 776 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *karînah* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *karîn*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *karînah* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karînahs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 753 A *karînah* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karînah* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karîn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karîn*. When he is sorry and expresses [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 753 755 778 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *karînah* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyût Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fâtimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karînah*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 2/A

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 2/A A woman whose child is affected by her *karînah* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fâtimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

2/A [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *sirbah* made of *bûs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *sirbah*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karînah* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] [825] [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karînah* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karînah* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karînah* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karînah*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karînah*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karînah* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] 2/A

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 10 ff.

2/A [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

778
755
[164]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LANŪN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S *ḥarīmah*.

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باسم الله المنعت بالأقانيم هو الرحمن العظيم غالب جميع المظلومات القوية الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون شاهد الملائكة سبحانه
وتعالى السيطانية من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وزراعك القوي ونورك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حبالي
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل				
توكل يا ميكائيل				
توكل يا عزرائيل				
توكل يا سوسيال				

توكل يا سوسيال بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعرشه الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرمة
القرينة الملعونة وسعيا بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE ḤARĪN AND ḤARĪNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448–451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarīna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarīna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayūm and Asyūṭ Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarīna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *aḥrās* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she [751] has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyūṭ Province and also from one in Fayūm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Ela-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*, [767]
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [793]
remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [752]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared. 757 278

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better. 757 171

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment! 757 [372]

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again. 757 278

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able 757

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*jā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāh*, plural of *gāha*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is 755
clear that those who thus imitated the " old wives " of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay 764
(caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have 752
become famous for " curing " it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamid. He has two " treatments " for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter " method " makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is " the [753]
poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last 757
year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places. 757 759

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows. 757 278

In the Gharbīya province, in a village called *Kafr Khidr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Ṭanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight. 759 752

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

"THE BLUE WATER" AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either "moving" or "smiting," is very common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from "the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless "cures" whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counter-agent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]
[2] [See note, p. 54.]
[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

752 old "method" which is only of advantage to its practitioner, who lives comfortably in the shadow of its effect on the minds of simpletons.

X

THE "CURE" FOR ULCERS

164 THE "old wife" prescribes for the patients who are suffering from chronic ulcers (*nawāṣīr*) having fetid purulent secretions, 752 the following "prescription": Mix one part of snuff (or tobacco dust) with one part of natron (its usual name [p. 22] is *atrūn*, and it is sesquicarbonate of soda). Pour on them two parts of very pure olive-oil and boil the whole for a while. Then anoint the tube of the ulcer (*nāṣūr*) and it will be cured.

Some excellent people have attested to me that it is a "cure" that has been proved by actual observation to be advantageous. It may be that time will show the truth of this experiment and beneficial remedy. But it is well known to-day that there is no cure for ulcers except scraping them with special instruments, or erasing the ulcerous tube, thus removing the cause, and sewing up the new wound. Sometimes cautery with a heated probe, or an electric cauterizer is employed.

Explanation of the "prescription." The snuff is a cauterizer, and on its entering the wounds it awakens their vitality, which has been weakened by the passage of time, and it changes the nature of the vile secretions for the better. Then fleshy pieces grow up filling the cavity of the ulcerous tube. (But that only results on the supposition that an ulcer is found continuing after the removal of its cause, such as ulcers resulting from a bullet which has entered a muscle deeply, and remains for some time with the surrounding part suppurating. Then it is extracted and the road leading to its original lodging-place has the appearance of [p. 23] an ulcerous tube. But appearances are not evidence).

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāḫela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be "cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 Ḥasan Aghā, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

(Ḥasan Aghā) seizes this opportunity and smears a pebble (which he had previously prepared [p. 43] with the help of hospital servants or surgical attendants) with the blood of the patient. After certain exertions and the display of a little effort (to complete the deception) he hands over to the patient the stone moist with blood. This is the method of Ḥasan Aghā who obtains enormous wealth in return for his fatigue and service on behalf of the Egyptian world. For his easy circumstances are due to many ignorant folk who are in a worse state than beasts of burden since there is no value in life or health among them. But it is a pity that Ḥasan Aghā is to-day (June, 1894) engaged in prison, since the Government arrested him and the hand of Justice took revenge on him for killing one of the patients in his agency. Do not ask about what grief the people of those parts had when they suffered their famous "surgeon." We wish the excellent Aghā, aforementioned, a good life in penal servitude at Ṭurra[1] and we hope that Allah will inspire his devotees with intellect to guide them aright thereby, when the calamities of diseases afflict them.

XXVI

THE INJECTION WITH "THE BITTER TOY"

For long we have heard from people about extravagances in the matter of injection, and that it produces fat in those who are lean and slender. When we asked certain people as to the composition of the substances entering into the injection they answered that that was the knowledge of the womenfolk. [p. 44.] Allah decreed, however, that a certain woman of Cairo came to indicate to me one day what it did to her daughter who complained of the flow of blood with the feces and violent dysentery. So I asked her concerning the cause. She hesitated a little; then she said: I went to an "old wife" famous for injection in order that she might attend to my daughter because she was lean. She produced "*the Bitter Toy*" (*al-la'ba al-murra*) and boiled it in pig's grease for half an hour, and then placed it in a metal syringe, and bade me hold the

[1] [A well-known convict establishment near Cairo. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

i: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [161] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 759 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 697 644

Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events 843
in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and [842]
symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles
in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this [115]
chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant
divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. [753] ●
If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or [826]
abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and [262]
they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a [626]
common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home. 842

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'. 842 154 [753]

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying), 844 [843]

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects. 789 [843] [755]

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḫarīneh*, [304] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *akrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḫarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *'afrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḫarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *'afārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḫarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḫarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḫarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḫrān* (plural of *ḫarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḫrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḫarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḫrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḫrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḫarīn* or her *ḫarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḫarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḫarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḫarīneh*, *ginēh es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḫrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
794 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789 who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
794 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
996 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
994 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

[854]
[291]
[142]

854

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *felláḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
• [153] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
854 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
164 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this
515 she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyûṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

F 769 775 F [825]

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadâ*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

F 764 765 784

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

F 765 753 784

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

F 764

The death and funeral rites of the Çopts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

E [442]

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754 corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753 clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755] figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754 in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171 many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776 people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787 among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

755 [789] [855]

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the 753 757 278

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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753 757 878 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then [764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

878 757 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a little longer.

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and 515 dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practi- 855 cally all over the world. It has not even died out in modern Eng- [171] land, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are ●753 adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zîr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's possessions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mâ shâ' Allâh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḫarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 794

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḫarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F E 755 753 776 794

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 798

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 183
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left. When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *ʿafrīt*, speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *ʿafrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *ʿafrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *s'w*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

757 paper containing some powder and said, "I make plasters of this antidote (*tiriāḳ*), and place them upon the piles; then they are cured by the permission of Allah." I took a little of it between the tips of my fingers, and on examination found it to be orpiment (*rahg*) one of the compounds of deadly caustic arsenic (*zarnīkh*) which the common people call "ratsbane" (*samm al-fār*).[1]

"We took it, reckoning it pure gold, but the blacksmith's bellows revealed the vileness of the iron."

Anyone who has the least smattering of the science of medicine knows that this element is caustic. Barely have a few days passed after using it before a man endures considerable pain, and when he recognises the source of his mistake and the consequences of his foolish belief, he is filled with remorse.

VII

SUNSTROKE (BAṬḤAT—AL-SHAMS)

753 THIS is cerebral congestion from the effect of the solar rays, and the manner of its treatment according to the method of
755 the "old wives" is, that the key of a door which faces towards the east, and is opened counter-clockwise is procured. (There must be found [p. 21] in every village at least one house fulfilling these two conditions). The "old woman" takes this key, procures woollen cords (or braces) and wraps them round the head of the patient, using the key which is in her other hand to accomplish this. In this way she keeps on bracing these cords until she can do no more. All this while the patient behaves like a bereaved woman, lamenting, and calling out, and crying for mercy, but there is none to pity. Next the "old woman" begins massaging the patient's head. I have seen her with my own eyes after all these operations, biting the skin of the patient's forehead between the eyebrows, in a fierce manner even to the effusion of blood. For she believes that the bones of the patient's head have become

[1] [Arsenic trisulphide. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 976
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḳīḳ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce;* and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

754 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no
●753 one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*
776 did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sīrāf [?] (جون سيراف),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalīfa*) of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or "bewitched" according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded 756
people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164]
suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 798
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl [753] ●
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother [754]
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throw- 756
ing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement, is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives " are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

" And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Ḳuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhiliya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

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drugs, salts and acids and alkalis with labels, on which were written their names in Latin; in very indistinct letters on account of their age. The bystander could not help suspecting that this was merely the leavings of some pharmacist, which this man had bought up after the death of the owner.

On turning my head to the right I saw written on one of these bottles "sulphuric acid," so I asked his lordship about the contents of the bottle, in order to try him, that it might put an end to my suspicions regarding him. He answered straightway, "This is oil of mandragora, or apples of the Jinn." Then he produced a vessel gilded on the outside and said, "This is the *Kohl* (stibium) of the Forty. It puts and end to obscuration of the surface of the eye, and I produced it myself by boiling it in oil of rose mixed with the grease of serpents forty times." He generously presented each of us with some to experiment with, but when we had left his dwelling we threw what was in our hands on the ground, except one of us who was determined to try it. He put a little of it in his eye, and the next day was afflicted with ophthalmia of the cornea which took him fifteen days' treatment to get over its evil effects.

Mark the difference, O you who are intelligent and skilful, between the dwelling of this ignoramus aping the physician and [p. 61] the clinic of one of our keen native doctors. You will find the difference distinctly visible. While the former rejoices in success and prosperity, the latter suffers ill-luck and neglect.

XXX

HEADACHE (ṢUDĀ')[1]

F 164 753

THIS is applied to many illnesses, but is only rarely an original illness. It arises from decay in the bone of the occiput,

[1] [Professor E. G. Browne, in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine* mentions (p. 4) that this noun of pain appears in the Latin version of the Kānūn of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) as Soda (*Sermo universalis de Soda*), a term which must have bewildered those without the Arabic original. Tr.]

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to " cure " it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the " beating " of the temple-vein. They mean by this the " cutting " of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the " cutting " of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the " beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for " beating the vein " at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him ; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this " cure " for *Ṣudā'* by " cutting the temple vein " is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an " operation " of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately :

" Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a " cure " for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this " operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion ; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this " operation " see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord. 164 753

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the " treatment " of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is " cured." 755 [156]

The explanation given of these " cures " is that sciatica is a disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of 753 755 [158]

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are 854
his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, 755
and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, 753
before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. 164
Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heavi- 753
ness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The 757
"operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. [164]
Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the 563
Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and 759

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]
[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḳ*, plural of *gōḳa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand *Shaikh*, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753] cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352] that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [771] the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [563] for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. 756 So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Ḥuseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Kuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

755 for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child
787 until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his
782 mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandara*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will [753] not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78.] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

755 "Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is clear that those who thus imitated the "old wives" of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay (caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have become famous for "curing" it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He has two "treatments" for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter "method" makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is "the poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is *Ghafūr* (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
[153] [152] [861] cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers [562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

[157] "AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they 'prescribed' incensing,
Which an "old wife" among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation?
And does their 'incensing' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton?"

Some of the "old wives" in the provinces were famed in past ages for their "cure" of venereal disease by "incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An "old wife" came to "incense" a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from [164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the "incensing" of the "doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkha*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-khartīt*) consists of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIḲḲA

THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance !)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aṣwānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

155 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[996] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [953] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

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XX

SHAHKA

F 164

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahka* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahka* (injury by the evil eye) or *nazra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

F 753 954 F 757

The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

E 757 278

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [calumba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little, the soft paste is taken and

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
EGYPT MR

E 750 308

applied to the wound. It resembles soft collodium[1] except that the latter is beneficial because of its transparency, which makes it allowable to witness the progress of the wound beneath it without the need of lifting it and causing the fleshy surfaces to bleed.

XXII

THE "REMOVED" HEART

F 164 753 755

WE see the "old wives" diagnosing anæmia as "the removal of the heart and its being changed from its place as a result of an accident." They "cure" it as follows: The patient sits as in the case of *Takrīfa* (see Part I, p. 19) [p. 39] and the "old wife" sits down in front of him and places her fore-finger under the xiphoid cartilage, which they imagine is "the feather of the heart" (ريشة القلب) or its gristle. Then after moving it a little the "old wife" cries out, as if she had stumbled upon a buried person, saying: Oh, my child! Your heart is removed and the "feather" (*rīsha*) is falling considerably!

The true explanation. They assert that the xiphoid cartilage is bound to the heart by strong ties so that when the heart changes it pulls it in because it is like a tent-peg holding it firm. They "cure" the patients by one of two methods:

(1) The first is an endeavour to raise the above-mentioned "feather" to the top, i.e. returning it to its original position. It is necessary to resume this "operation" for seven days, the action lasting each day about ten minutes.

(2) The second is famous for its success. The patient is ordered to go to the door of a house opening on the west, and to hang by his right hand from that door in such a way that the side mentioned carries the rest of his body. He must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain thus without breathing for a space of time varying according to the ability of the patient. When he feels he is without power to retain his

[1] [Pyro-xylin, gun-cotton. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāshela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

[773] [776] hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *ḳarīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

[776] [753] A *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and expressed [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

[776] [753] [755] [778] If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 1 A

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 1 A A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

[755] A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1 A [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 753 [771] 776

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 753

That a woman's *karīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. [773] (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) 7/A

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, II, pp. 16 ff.

7/A [See category 116, Plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar.

755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

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534
755
787
[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

●753
776

These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

753 796 [776]

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

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tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for in- [171]
stance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
846 *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorak*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subá'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

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endless friction, disputes, and uneasy relations occur. Brother is pitted against brother, father against son, mother against daughter, and so on between the various other categories of relatives. In fact, some of the popular sayings indicate that the relation between kin is pregnant with friction and discord. It is said that 'relatives are like scorpions', 'the relative's pot never reaches the boiling point' and 'who brings disasters but relatives?'. It is also indicative of the uneasy side of connections between relatives to hear that it is from the relatives more than others that one should guard against the effects of the evil eye. 602 578 [154]

The 'in-law' relationship also plays an important part in the harmony or discord that pervades a family atmosphere. Whether brothers live together as one economic unit, or whether a father 'repulses' his married son, depends to a great extent on the congeniality of the brother's wives, or the son's wife and her people. In this particular context, the conflict is usually one between the structurally sanctioned behaviour between the brothers and the new situation created by marriage and children to two different women. Thus ideally brothers should marry sisters to minimize disputes over the children or domestic affairs, and this is probably one of the reasons for the preferential marriage of cousins. In the case of a married son, the parents have priority over the wife and her people, as descent is the structural keynote to behaviour in this situation. 606 578 [582]

Indeed a great deal of friction and uneasiness in relationship is due to the fact that the individual in some situations is unable to strike a balance between the structural behaviour on one hand, and the exigencies of life and personal feelings on the other hand. A great deal of the diffused and overt aggression that is prevalent in this community is partly due to the 'bottling up' of personal and spontaneous feeling, or at least to the very limited scope for its outlet or for its direct expression in action. 578 154 156

A few examples of disputes, illustrating this point can be given. Two brothers were married to two sisters, and were living in one compound working together, and forming an economic unit. The wife of the younger brother died, and he remarried a girl who was unrelated to the brother's wife. Immediately intrigues and friction arose, and the two brothers had to separate. The friction cropped up again when the older brother got his daughter married to a cousin of theirs, while his brother had a boy who was considered socially more eligible because he was the girl's cousin through both father and mother. This event brought the brothers to non-speaking terms and 'Arabs' tried twice to reconcile them, but met with no success. 578 593 [582]

Another interesting case was of a father suing his son before the court and trying to denounce him as his son. The cause was the rage of the father alleging that his son had made himself a nuisance in the village by his gossip, his writing of complaints against people to the official authorities in the central government, and on top of that, he had married without the father's approval.

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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the [illegible] patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [178] [845] [847]

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
852 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
867 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[152] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's
[764] death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies,
[152] and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
852 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation,
154 as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[754] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardised system of organisation of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳīyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

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842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the [754] peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791 756 776 787

[291]

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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454 It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over
754 the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Com-
788 passionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King
776 and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

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Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

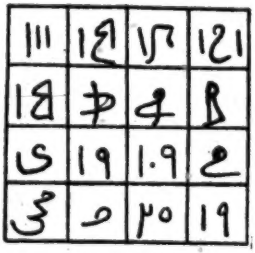

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

754 789 158

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue.

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.

[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

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over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *'omdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

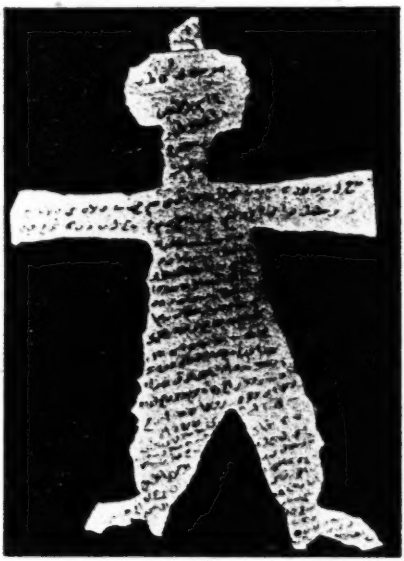

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *ʿafrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *ʿafrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *ʿafrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

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787 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the
685 man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291] [342] [352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them.
[152] They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

● 754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also

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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 515 855 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practically all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern [171] counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 753 755 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

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the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

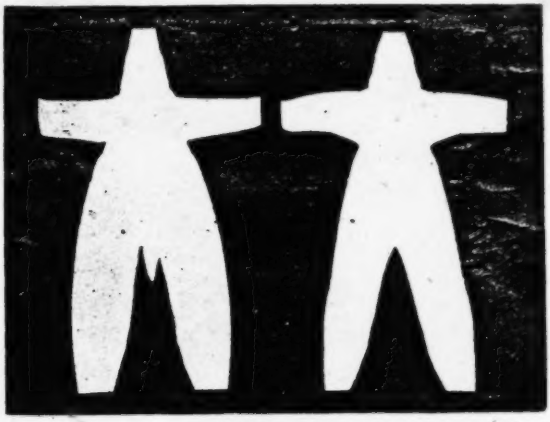

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of
753 my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
781 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *ḫarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

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SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *ʿafrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *ʿafrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

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832 754 If a man loves a woman and wants to marry her, and she has no affection for him, he asks a female friend to assist him in the following way. The friend visits the woman at a time when she is likely to be combing her hair. It is the custom for women to conceal all their hair-combings in the wall of one of the rooms, between the bricks. The friend notices where the woman puts her hair-combings, and, at the first opportunity, steals some of the hair when the owner is not present, and gives it to the man. He takes it to a magician, who measures the length of each hair by the span of his hand. The magician then writes a spell, and, going to a grave, puts the hair inside it, keeping the spot a secret, for no one must know where the hair is hidden. He puts the spell in his pocket, and on some pretext or other (he may ask her for a cup of coffee, for example) visits the house of the woman whose hair he has buried. While he is sitting in her house he will produce the paper on which he has written the spell, and tell her to wear it [789] under her arm, stating that it will afford her excellent protection in the event of anyone else writing a spell against her to prevent her marrying. He thus persuades her to accept his spell, hinting that it may also bring her a good husband. The woman, of course, has no idea that the magician is in league with the man who wants to marry her. She accordingly accepts the spell, hangs it round her neck, and, immediately becoming madly in love with the man who is in love with her, is, of course, only too glad to marry him! This is a very common practice in many parts of Egypt.

754 789 It is also the custom to protect houses from the evil eye, and various decorations are employed for this purpose. Sometimes a plate or saucer is plastered into the wall just above the main entrance, or pieces of old carving, picked up from an ancient rubbish-mound, may be let into the masonry round about the door. The horns of sheep and other animals are also hung over the doorway as a charm to protect the house from the evil eye. A 'bride of the corn,' as already stated,[1] is hung over the front door for the same purpose. Inside the house, on the walls of the living-rooms, I have seen painted designs which the owner told me were put there to keep off the evil eye. Indeed, the devices resorted to for protecting houses, fields, animals, and people of all ages against this dreaded power are multitudinous, and to describe all those that I am acquainted with would require an entire book.

[1] See p. 172.

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F A 304

priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳkāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kꜣ*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḫ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmehet, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

A [113]

[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Ehevertrage aus vorsaïtische Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

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F A 789 787

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

A [113]

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751] at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754 ●
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([51])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([51a]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of educa- 181
tion, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year 527
through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast
comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys
two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food,
sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever.

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has 181
earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does 185
he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he 423
will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to
own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when
the time comes to repay? Sufficient unto the day...

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already 183
dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he
begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys
seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there
is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate.

Maqrîzi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this 181
shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is 185
never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians
never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other
lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of
reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The
Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'."

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the 181
occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the ac-
tual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate
sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful
and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and
thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered.

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred 181
things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for 771
children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the
success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this un-
believable credulity.

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, 181
even within the same family. Their master they mistrust 571
even when he does well by them. They are like children 578
too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else 754
of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root
of their belief in the Evil Eye.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 976
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḥīḥ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce;* and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

754 753 776 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sīrāf [?] (جان سيراف),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalīfa*) of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or " bewitched " according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle ?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 789
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 754
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARĪNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukhṭ*) among the Jinn,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

757 Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

754
152
828

" WHEN the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *shabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: ' Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was " envying " children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, " Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī ! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now ! " So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, " Oh, you fat camel ! " [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance!) 754 753

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this. 751 825

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments. 754

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk. [189]

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land. 753

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium (" influencer ") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the " enchanter " to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But " in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him !). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

755 except in Allah! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my
754 eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who "envied" you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an "old wife" who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the "Envied" and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the "Envied" poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

789 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows:

789 Oh, fine salt! Oh, chaste substance!
539 Your mother is free; your father, fine!
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains!
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die!

[1] [The *'Ashūrā'* is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XX

SHAHKA

F 164

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahka* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahka* (injury by the evil eye) or *nazra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

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The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

E 759 758

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [calumba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little the soft paste is taken and

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

i: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home. 842

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'. 842 154 [753]

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying), 844 [843]

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects. 789 [843] [755]

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation [083] from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly [062] prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. [076] Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the 553 end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important [080] feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven [055] times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story [082] of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and 865
is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and 858
pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous im- 865
mediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he 593
is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expres- 152
sing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, [1951]
two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a tradi- 865
tional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced 593
old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something 152
that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg 755
fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is [154]
a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in [154]
children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village. [159] [1944]

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa. [1988]

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass. [1938]

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured. [1955]

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

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159 him and left him for Cairo, whereupon Mahmoud followed him to effect a reconciliation and the brother was persuaded to return.

A year ago he helped his cousin, who is not strong enough for farming, to open a small shop. The income from the shop as well as from farming is pooled by all the family, Mahmoud being the one who looks after the needs and requirements of all his brothers and their wives.

[755] Mahmoud is a great believer in the evil eye, and it was his practice to warn the writer against certain people by asking him to recite a 'Sura' from the Koran on passing them. He told the writer that he usually spreads on parts of his farm a handful of sand from the tomb of Saint Abu-Naggi, who lies buried on high ground, to ward off the evil eye. In this connection he related the following incident: once, a person well known for his evil eye deliberately passed by Mahmoud's farm and admired it. The same man later passed by his farm and admired his cow, which after that day gave blood instead of milk. As Mahmoud could no longer tolerate the envier, he seized upon the occasion of a funeral in the clan's guest house to which the envier belonged, and went to complain about him, holding a white flag and asking his clan to stop their kinsman from casting his evil eye on his land and animals.

Mahmoud is strong and healthy and takes special pride in the fact that the malaria epidemic did not touch him. He interprets this as evidence that his social intentions and dealing are genuinely good. And because of his health during the epidemic period, he used to visit and assist the sick, and since there were very few who could attend to the burial ceremony and prayers, he made a point of not missing any if he could manage it as attendance is a pious deed and God rewards it. He is also grateful to God [731] that he and his brothers managed to save their bread from the torrent that destroyed most of the village harvest in 1948. They all waded into the water, spending a whole night and morning in gathering their floating stacks of corn and removing them to the dry land.

In assessing Mahmoud's personality and position in the village, one must point out the structurally precarious composition of Mahmoud's family, consisting of half-brothers and a cousin. Yet his personality, together with the close relationship between the brothers' wives, has assured the unity of the family. This might also be due in part to the fact that none of the brothers has a grown-up boy, a factor that might tempt the father to work independently.

Mahmoud combines a conservative and unimaginative nature with extraversion and a great deal of self-confidence. Although he has been to town on frequent visits and occupied an official post, he has not altered his dress or accent in favour of town ways. His 'zabout', the outer garment, still has the long and wide sleeves that stretch at least three inches past the hand, his turban is a large one, and he is fond of carrying his thick stave on moving about in the village.

Mahmoud is a satisfactory example of the older generation of the village,

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347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. " Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- ●755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

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854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
782 necks of the hapless infants.
755

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en-
[144] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[784] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [716] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 716 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of [755] a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[412]

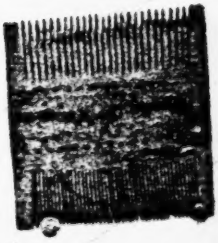

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 832 302 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 589 302 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet. 302

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes. [278] [415] [755]

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache! 784 853 302 753

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them. 291 515 [754]

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads. 291 [462]

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 291 301 554

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843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
774 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
[783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789] who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
774 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be
● 755 buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

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FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

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755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

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This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

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In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted
into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

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787 786 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

● 755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 782 755 787 [263] [789]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

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juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear. 757 278

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt 757 755

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FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

[1] Sulphate of zinc.

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F 898 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

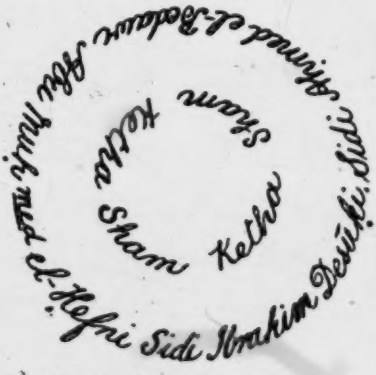

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

[539]

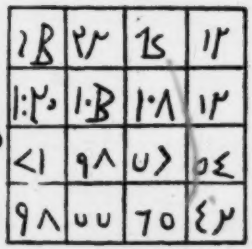

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

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added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755
rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way.

A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755
You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, 841
and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it[1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'"[2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776
Syrian. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account, 755

[1] Or cured.
[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

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F 776 755 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C 755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F 755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure. The lupine is prepared for food by frequent immersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

F 752 751

F 755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

F [776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

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Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

755

[789]

[855]

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH 753 757 278

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

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753 757 878 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then [764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

878 757 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a *little longer.*

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

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to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children dean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and 515 dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practi- 855 cally all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern [171] counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

753 755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

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the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

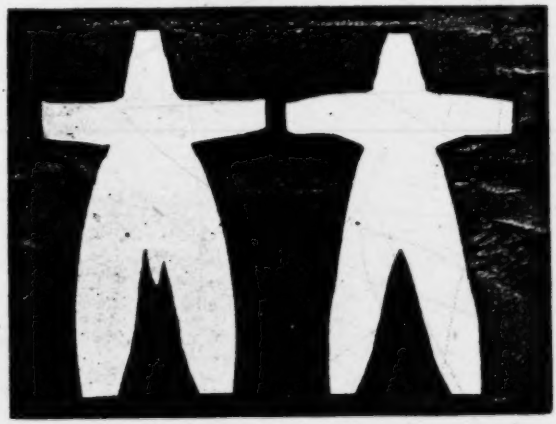

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of
753 my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

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751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 781 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, [776] and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḥarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

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Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessèd ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 392 782

F [791] [24]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

E 26A 787 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

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when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *'afārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *'afrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *'afārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *'afrīteh* (feminine form of *'afrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

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scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

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756 returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which
755 the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told
[753] the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

755 Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left.
[787] When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*,
[776] speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean
[84] woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

755 When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman
776 became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They
[841]

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

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F 755 776

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

791 776

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

F E 342 469

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

F E 842 755

F E 782 756

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" [152] Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

F E 782 776 755

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

F E 513 776

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F A 464 465

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 291 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 1[illegible]).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

A [113]

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775 776 779]

G [412 243]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ſty*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ṯbgu*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *s'w*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an '*afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers,
and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without
them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for
as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have
taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels
an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice
or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swell-
ings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment
clearly depends on what plants they have within reach,
and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these
sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid
on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain
condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on
the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no
point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing ori-
ginal in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole
of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond
Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of
the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fella-
heen are even more effective than their manner of life in
isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which
'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he
founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself
weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these
ritual observances.

PART ONE

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

To those who wish to investigate the secret of the folk-medicine of the modern Egyptians, we offer new data which we have obtained after diligent search and careful scrutiny. For it is a secret which those who have it treasure, and take care not to divulge, as if it were the philosopher's stone or the *arcanum* of alchemy. Yet, if it were among the actualities which are corroborated by scientific proof and intellectual evidence, impostors would not hide it behind veils of falsehood, nor gild it for the minds of simple people, who trust in it and consider it a heavenly thing and a divine science. I am referring to a low trade and mean occupation, which charlatans engage in as a means of obtaining spoil and as a source of plunder. Indeed we ought rather to designate them as public robbers because they go round the countryside sometimes in company, sometimes alone, so that no village is free from their mischief, nor does any land escape from their guile. Some of them disguise themselves in the garb of pious derwishes and of learned *ulemas*. Others make the speaking in a foreign language the snare by which they appropriate much of the property of those whose strength has been reduced by diseases, and who are ignorant even to-day of the methods of physicians and of the water-holes of healing. 121 755

It is strange that the only thing one can understand from the jargon of these swindlers is that apparently they have devoted their lives to the extraction of the treasures of spiritual sciences. So that, when they say anything, you see simple folk welcoming them and magnifying their value. And they have no excuse for so doing, except that the roots of these follies have for long been planted in their thoughts. They have been scared by the tales of the "old women" whose 755

[Page 14 is blank]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755 sole desire morning, noon, and night is to forge such like absurdities, regarding which "*Allah has sent down no authority.*"[1]

Would that the young men of the present generation would confine themselves in their medical experiments to what neither benefits nor harms them. Instead of doing so, however, they repeat the experiment again and again, asserting that what did not succeed in the past was due to their own shortcomings, because they did not completely follow out the whole of the instructions in the "prescription," and as ill-luck would have it, the "prescriber," *alias* the quack, has done his utmost to improvise ingredients to which the hand of man cannot attain, for the simple reason that they do not exist.

Nevertheless, these "prescriptions" of the quacks are sometimes highly esteemed when it happens that the sick man is cured of his disease, or his health improves gradually, after his using the "prescription," or the supposed drugs; whereas the truth is that the illness passed through the normal stages [p. 6] until a cure resulted, a common rule in diseases. I may say that many of them succeed, not from any therapeutic peculiarities in them, but from the play of imagination and nervous volitional influence, which according to biologists in most recent times, has a very dangerous action upon the constitution.

000 Professor B—— mentions a famous incident. Sentence was passed upon a criminal guilty of murder. The Criminal Court handed him over for experiment to a learned physiologist who wished to prove clearly the influence of imagination upon vitality. He therefore tied up the arm of the criminal after blindfolding him, and addressed him as follows: "Your soul will depart without your feeling anything, because you are going to be bled to death." He then lanced the man's arm slightly, and poured over it a stream of lukewarm water, which the criminal took to be blood flowing over his body, and within half an hour his appearance changed and he died as if from loss of blood.

Another savant records that two youths were rivals for the love of a fascinating girl, till jealousy forced them to take steps so that one of them might free himself from the com-

[1] [Koran, xii. 40; liii 23. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
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petition of the other by taking a draught from a cup of poison. So they brought their witnesses (as is the common custom with Europeans in such cases) into a darkened room in which they had previously deposited ten cups, one of them containing quick poison, and the remainder other liquids. The two set to work, but as soon as they had raised the cups to their lips they immediately fell dead before they could taste anything of the poison, for, in fact, both cups contained ordinary drinks.

[p. 7.] I happened to be one day in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, Cairo, in the operating theatre, when there appeared a youth suffering from a complaint which did not call for an operation of more than ten minutes. He was afraid, however, of the pain of an operation and would submit to it only on the condition of his being chloroformed. So the chloroform was brought, and the operator made the patient imagine that he had taken a great quantity of it, and that he would be rendered completely insensible. Before long he fell into a deep sleep and completely lost consciousness like one who has inhaled a great amount of chloroform; while all the time the physician had not made him smell one drop of it.

Now that we have demonstrated by actual instances the influence of imagination, there only remains for us to set down here, in order, all the falsehoods and absurdities in which the "old women" trade; for anyone who buys from them comes away fleeced. And since these stupidities as a whole are named the *Science of the Rukka*, or of the "old wives," there can be no harm here in mentioning the reasons for their being called by this word *Rukka*, the meaning of which we have discovered after a long investigation and uninterrupted inquiry. It is as follows:

Rukka in the technical terminology of the "old wives" is a piece of wood upon which flax is shaken in order to get rid of any foreign substance that might spoil it. This was the practice in ancient times as well as to-day. In special circumstances, however, the word is applied to the women who are at home, whilst the men are busy in the fields. For they usually gather together of an evening to perform whatever duties their husbands or masters may have imposed on them. Then the talk goes round amongst them at those times and

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755 they boast of the success of a "prescription," which one of them has tried [p. 8] upon one of her daughters, or on one of the members of her family. Hence the association of these "prescriptions" with the *rukka*, for according to the dictionary *rikka* as well as *rikāka* means "an old woman of weak intellect."[1] In my opinion one of these two expressions is the reason why these "prescriptions" are named the *Science of the Rukka*. For whoever considers these absurdities, both old and new, will find that they have their source in the imagination of the "old women" and in their foolish beliefs. And since the original design in the composition of this treatise was to investigate these beliefs, we now proceed to retail them to the readers of our book by way of admonition and warning.

[1] [The author definitely spells the word as *rikka* (رِكّة), which is the form of vocalization adopted in the *Supplementary Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum*, 1926, p. 99. (See above also, p. 5 *f.n.*) The form *rukka*, however, is more in agreement with the vernacular pronunciation. Besides the above explanation of the origin of the word, Vollers has proposed another etymology, viz., from the Italian *Rocca*. (See his article in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol LI, p. 322.) Reference may also be made to Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, chap. xi. Tr.]

I

THE TAḲRĪFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him before her with his lower extremities extended, while she remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way. Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great force, the result of which is often death. She does all this without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an "operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient. (We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault. because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it) Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines depends proportionately upon the employment of violence or gentleness in that " operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that " old woman," saying, " The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain ? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the " prescription " of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the " old woman " who " prescribed " this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

THE common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers). Their " prescriptions " would make a bereaved widow laugh ! For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there be found in it " the bone of the unbeliever "—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the " old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

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[p. 12.] But if it be impossible to find such a bone, then the "old woman," entrusted with the cure of the invalid, orders one of the patient's relatives to go alone in the second part of the eve of Friday into the cemetery and bring back a brick from a grave in which no one has been buried for a long time, and place it under the head of the fevered patient. It will improve his health. 777 756 755

The "old women" also employ for a relapse a wonderful "prescription," which I have seen with my own eyes in the case of a patient whom I was treating for a violent intermittent fever. When I was by his side asking him how he felt, and thinking about his cure, I heard a commotion in the courtyard of the house. On investigating the matter, I saw a woman in one of the corners of the room where the patient was, busy muttering spells over some dry cakes of cattle-dung. Outside I saw another "old woman" of an evil countenance, with a white girdle over her black clothes, bearing on her head a sieve with a great crowd of boys behind her pelting her with stones, and jeering at her. She took no notice of them nor scolded them (because the "prescription" demands that), but continued advancing thus towards the door of the sick-chamber. Then when she reached it she began calling out, "Is there anyone here in a relapse (*mankūs*)?" The other woman who was inside the room answered, *mā 'indanā mankūs walā wag' fī rūs.* "There is no one in a relapse here, nor even with a headache," and she hit her in the face with one of the cakes, over which she had ceased reciting the spell. But the other kept on asking and the other answering her, after the same fashion, until the twelve cakes were all used up. Then the "old woman" outside carried them in the sieve upon her head and went off, I know not where. [p. 13.] I was seized with the greatest wonder and astonishment, and on asking for an explanation, was informed that this "prescription" was the cure for a relapse. As for those cakes, the "old woman" would throw them into a disused well that same night. My comment was that in that case there was no necessity for salts of quinine, and I withdrew from their midst leaving them to their folly. 755

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III

THE MUSHĀHARA

This is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

This should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the above-mentioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

957 paper containing some powder and said, " I make plasters of this antidote (*tiriāḳ*), and place them upon the piles; then they are cured by the permission of Allah." I took a little of it between the tips of my fingers, and on examination found it to be orpiment (*rahg*) one of the compounds of deadly caustic arsenic (*zarnīkh*) which the common people call " ratsbane " (*samm al-fār*).[1]

" *We took it, reckoning it pure gold, but the blacksmith's bellows revealed the vileness of the iron.*"

Anyone who has the least smattering of the science of medicine knows that this element is caustic. Barely have a few days passed after using it before a man endures considerable pain, and when he recognises the source of his mistake and the consequences of his foolish belief, he is filled with remorse.

VII

SUNSTROKE (BAṬḤAT—AL-SHAMS)

953 THIS is cerebral congestion from the effect of the solar rays, and the manner of its treatment according to the method of
955 the " old wives " is, that the key of a door which faces towards the east, and is opened counter-clockwise is procured. (There must be found [p. 21] in every village at least one house fulfilling these two conditions). The " old woman " takes this key, procures woollen cords (or braces) and wraps them round the head of the patient, using the key which is in her other hand to accomplish this. In this way she keeps on bracing these cords until she can do no more. All this while the patient behaves like a bereaved woman, lamenting, and calling out, and crying for mercy, but there is none to pity. Next the " old woman " begins massaging the patient's head. I have seen her with my own eyes after all these operations, biting the skin of the patient's forehead between the eyebrows, in a fierce manner even to the effusion of blood. For she believes that the bones of the patient's head have become

[1] [Arsenic trisulphide. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755 place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751 monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754 some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753 say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 776 *jinnī*. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian ('*aḥīḥ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce;* and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756
market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755 776 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

756 787 [539] 776

"Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife" enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

755 776 787 798

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Kāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a Shaikh from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳih. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands leaving between them a distance which he measures with his finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
878 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women." 831

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness. 755 778 751 [164]

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view. 842

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Some women who are barren carry a sachet of [illegible] powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

This is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have the "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)*

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

* [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhiliya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXVI

THE TANFĪḤA

E F 164

THIS is one of the absurdities, the validity of which has overcome the minds of the simple in our happy country. The people of Upper Egypt call it the *Talwīḥa* (" *swinging* "), but amongst the inhabitants of the towns, such as Cairo and Alexandria, it is called (معمد) (sic) [Al-Mu'aumad (?)] and so also by the people of the provinces of Lower Egypt. With all its names it means the acute relaxation of the bowels, which attacks very young children. The " cure " is as follows: The " old wife " orders the child to be placed in a spacious woollen cloth which is wrapped round it several times till it is used up. Then two women take hold of the ends of this cloth, with the wretched child imprisoned in it, and turn it round following a perpendicular circular motion during more than a quarter of an hour. This, in truth, is the easiest and quickest way to kill children, because the child, who has the misfortune to be born to the person whose thoughts are controlled by the power of [p. 53] delusion and ignorance, is seized with concussion of the brain due to the wicked circular motion, and dies from lack of breath. In the cities mothers procure drugs from the " old wives "; the one which I have seen most commonly used being white lead (ceruse) (or carbonate of lead), mixed with the white of an egg. Now it is well-known that ceruse contains poisonous materials. So when it is placed on the child's belly it screams with pain. Then the mother continues in the thought that his weeping is only from the original pain which was the cause of her treating it with such a harmful remedy.

F 755 E 757 278

XXVII

" THE STRANGER " (GHARĪBA)

F 164 000

THE common people use this term generally for a number of eye ailments, especially sha'ra or trichiasis.[1] Many women

[1] [Introversion of the eyelid.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 ● EGYPT MR1

F 181

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

E F 181 759 554

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

E [291] E F 756 755 E F [152]

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

EF 756 755

the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, "Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī Shaukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began "treating" his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

EF [164] [278]

Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

EF 756 278

After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

[1] [See note above p. 43.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣuḍā'*.

We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains 164
chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such 753
as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the "treatment" 755
of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria [756]
in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is "cured."

The explanation given of these "cures" is that sciatica is a 753
disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming 755
drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that [158]
imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azīma*.]

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The "operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabibī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḳ*, plural of *gōḳa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle
anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something
of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the
Kūdīya, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of
them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall
short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets,
ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from
her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to
her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the
woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753]
cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have
actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady
friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she
would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it.
I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I
entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large
carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352]
that no part was above the other. This was out of respect
for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may
anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to
"Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in
accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [771]
the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [567]
for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of
Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such
names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influ- 756
ences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her,
and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her
one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells
in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or Shaikh *Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *ṭarbūsh* crowned with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandara*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

"Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is clear that those who thus imitated the " old wives " of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay (caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have become famous for " curing " it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He has two " treatments " for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization ; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter " method " makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is " the poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXVII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755
789
312
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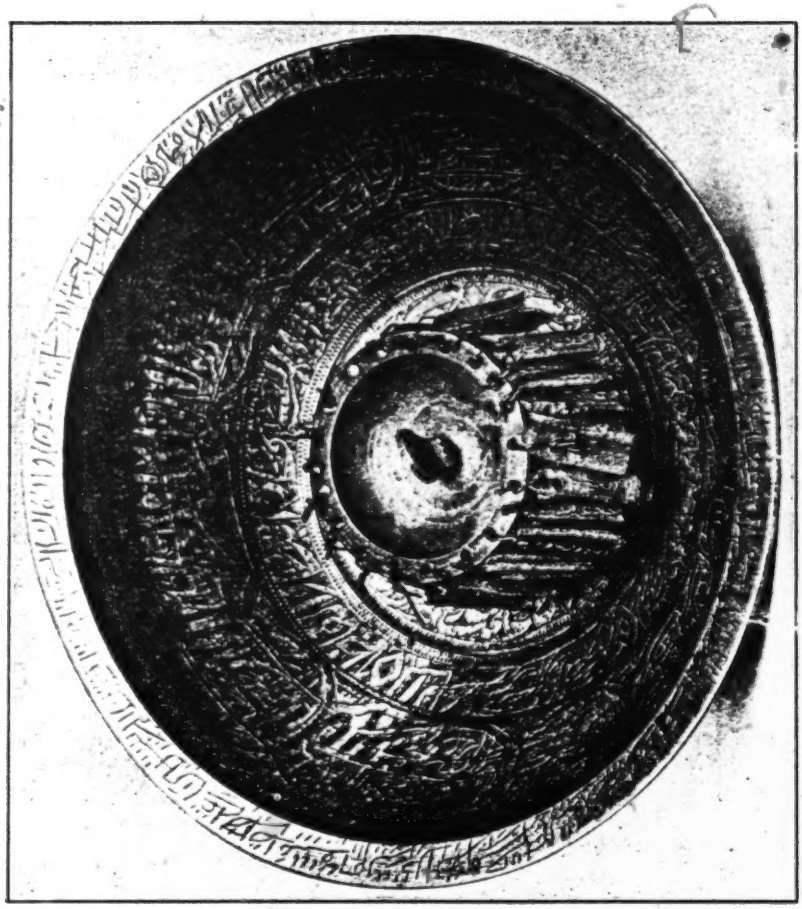

THE "FRAR" CUP (*Tâsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 69.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7¼ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2¼ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is *Ghafūr* (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'il, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

"MIXING" (MADHAḲ)

Madhaḳ literally means "mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. And they "prescribe" for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this "method" is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (أم الرأس) "mother of the head"], and there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

[1] [This "mixing" or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not 278
enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the 755
people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Suḳwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Suḳwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*ḳarn al-khartīt*) consists 278
of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāḳ*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Suḳwa* is applied generally to 164
pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on 757
coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as 753
much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

164 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIḲḲA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the ass, and one of the "doctors" beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the "sagacious ones" enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of "quacks" in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him !). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

n55 n54 except in Allah ! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who " envied " you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory ; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an " old wife " who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the " Envied " and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the " Envied " poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

n89 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows :

n89 539

Oh, fine salt ! Oh, chaste substance !
Your mother is free ; your father, fine !
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains !
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die !

[n96] [1] [The *'Ashūrā'* is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

789 Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

955 231 ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

955 164 THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

silk, coloured red, and named the Alexandrian shirt (*al-ḳamīṣ al-Iskandirānī*). (In reality it is made at Edkū[1] and its neighbourhood.)

It has some alleviating effect on skin trouble, for on account of the softness and smoothness of the shirt the skin is less irritated. But the danger, really, is that in the village there is to be found only one shirt set apart for this purpose. Hence it becomes a means of infection and the transmission of this danger. If each ailing child had a new shirt brought to him it would be favourable for a cure, a cure harmless and often beneficial.

IX

"THE BLUE WATER" AND CAUTERIZING THE HEAD

HEADACHE (*ṣudā'*)[2] either "moving" or "smiting," is very common [p. 21] in the provinces. Most of the cases we witnessed were among those whose eyes turn backwards and forwards on the occurrence of attacks of glaucoma, the pains arising from "the blue water."[3] They "cure" that ailment, that is, the "moving" variety, by cauterizing the head generally. It is like the other pitiless "cures" whose purpose the quacks know is to create a new and more painful counter-agent by which the patient forgets, or pretends to forget, his original ailment for some days, on account of his preoccupation with the intensity of his new pain. But that only lasts some days until the pain of the original ailment, whose cause was not rectified, becomes overpowering now that it is away from the influence of the quacks.

I knew of a man in the village of Maḥalla Diyāya in the Province of Gharbīya, who repelled the intensity of the pain of this ailment by means of cauterizing the temple. This is an

[1] [A village in the Delta 28½ miles east of Alexandria. Tr.]
[2] [See note, p. 54.]
[3] [The colloquial name in Egypt for glaucoma. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

THE "CURE" FOR ITCH AND DRY SCAB

AMONG the severest of the diseases that afflict mankind is skin-disease (or eczema) with its different varieties, either moist or dry. The "cure" for the dry variety among the "old wives" is to clothe the afflicted one in a garment of pure silk.

A very trustworthy person has related that he had not omitted to use everything prescribed by modern medicine, but without success. So he employed the silk garment and his ailment passed completely away. Indeed the prescription of the "old wife" agrees with what is set down in Canon Law regarding prohibiting men from wearing pure silk except in the case of itch.[1]

XII

THE "CURE" FOR PROTUBERANT TUMOURS

THE "old wives" do not stick at any of the diseases unless it is outside the sphere of trickery to affect its "cure." They do not trouble whether by the process of imagination, either through the power of the Jinn, or the development of thought, a "cure" will result. So beware of a very valuable "cure" for tumours which appear on the skin.

The patient seeks out a hen, free from blemish, without a single white feather, and watches her until she lays an egg in a place unreached [p. 5] by the rays of the sun. Then he brings lentils to her with their seeds to all appearance the same in number as the tumours on his body. After he has emptied

[1] [For the references to the prohibition of silken garments, see A. J. Wensinck: *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leiden, 1927, p. 45 f. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

955 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[994] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [953] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases. F 164 757

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured." F 759

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented. F 757 755 F [758]

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawallī* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.] E [755]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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E 750 378

applied to the wound. It resembles soft collodium[1] except that the latter is beneficial because of its transparency, which makes it allowable to witness the progress of the wound beneath it without the need of lifting it and causing the fleshy surfaces to bleed.

XXII

F

THE "REMOVED" HEART

164 753

WE see the "old wives" diagnosing anæmia as "the removal of the heart and its being changed from its place as a result of an accident." They "cure" it as follows: The patient sits as in the case of *Takrīfa* (see Part I, p. 19) [p. 39] and the "old wife" sits down in front of him and places her fore-finger under the xiphoid cartilage, which they imagine is "the feather of the heart" (ريشة قلب) or its gristle. Then after moving it a little the "old wife" cries out, as if she had stumbled upon a buried person, saying: Oh, my child! Your heart is removed and the "feather" (*rīsha*) is falling considerably!

755

The true explanation. They assert that the xiphoid cartilage is bound to the heart by strong ties so that when the heart changes it pulls it in because it is like a tent-peg holding it firm. They "cure" the patients by one of two methods:

(1) The first is an endeavour to raise the above-mentioned "feather" to the top, i.e. returning it to its original position. It is necessary to resume this "operation" for seven days, the action lasting each day about ten minutes.

(2) The second is famous for its success. The patient is ordered to go to the door of a house opening on the west, and to hang by his right hand from that door in such a way that the side mentioned carries the rest of his body. He must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain thus without breathing for a space of time varying according to the ability of the patient. When he feels he is without power to retain his

[1] [Pyro-xylin, gun-cotton. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (انقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāshela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

773 776 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *ḳarīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarīneh* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 753 A *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and expressed repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured. [755]

776 753 755 778 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) [787] 7/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

7/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (i.e. the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) ? [773]

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

? [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

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[76A]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHÚN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S *ḳarineh*.

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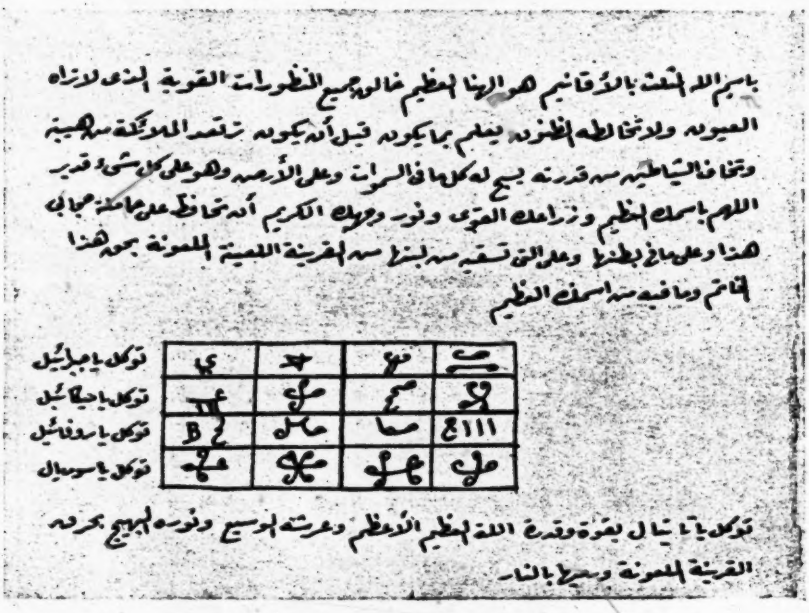

باسم الله المتعلق بالأقانيم هو الإله العظيم غالب جميع المظهرات القوية المنزه الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون ترتعد الملائكة من هيبته
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وذراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجاب
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل				
توكل يا ميكائيل				
توكل يا سرافائيل				
توكل يا سمسمائيل				

توكل يا سمسمائيل بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعزته الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرمة
القرينة الملعونة وسيطها بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE ḲARÎN AND ḲARÎNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845 776]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1):

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows: ● 755 787 533 534

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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787
[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [535]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attár", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Saghārid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts.

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver.

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

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(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755 776 171

the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief of the Abyssinians (15).

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies performed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", especially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia. 755 776 177 [171] [171]

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God 776 [171]

(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217

(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257

(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balā Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion. [534]

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [196] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could
have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list
of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

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Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Feilahin MR13
Silwa

fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

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[291]

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *ʿafārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear.

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt

FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

[1] Sulphate of zinc.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

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756 returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which
755 the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told
[753] the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

755 Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left.
[787] When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *ʿafrīt*,
[776] speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean
[84] woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

755 When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman
776 became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *ʿafrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *ʿafrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They
[841]

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

'AFĀRĪT

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F 171 114

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *fellāḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully.

F 171 756 114

As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

F A 361 342 353 343

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

F A 342

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

A 113

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60*a*.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 205 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 424] lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516] client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752 751] at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304] something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465] milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

I

THE TAḲRĪFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. 164
It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it 757
forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats 755
a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him before her with his lower extremities extended, while she remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way. Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great force, the result of which is often death. She does all this without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an "operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient. (We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault. because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it) Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture [278]
of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there 756
is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not 755
order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines depends proportionately upon the employment of violence or gentleness in that " operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that " old woman," saying, " The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain ? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the " prescription " of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the " old woman " who " prescribed " this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

THE common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers). Their " prescriptions " would make a bereaved widow laugh ! For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there be found in it " the bone of the unbeliever "—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the " old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p. 12.] But if it be impossible to find such a bone, then the "old woman," entrusted with the cure of the invalid, orders one of the patient's relatives to go alone in the second part of the eve of Friday into the cemetery and bring back a brick from a grave in which no one has been buried for a long time, and place it under the head of the fevered patient. It will improve his health.

The "old women" also employ for a relapse a wonderful "prescription," which I have seen with my own eyes in the case of a patient whom I was treating for a violent intermittent fever. When I was by his side asking him how he felt, and thinking about his cure, I heard a commotion in the courtyard of the house. On investigating the matter, I saw a woman in one of the corners of the room where the patient was, busy muttering spells over some dry cakes of cattle-dung. Outside I saw another "old woman" of an evil countenance, with a white girdle over her black clothes, bearing on her head a sieve with a great crowd of boys behind her pelting her with stones, and jeering at her. She took no notice of them nor scolded them (because the "prescription" demands that), but continued advancing thus towards the door of the sick-chamber. Then when she reached it she began calling out, "Is there anyone here in a relapse (*mankūs*)?" The other woman who was inside the room answered, *mā 'indanā mankūs walā wag' fī rūs.* "There is no one in a relapse here, nor even with a headache," and she hit her in the face with one of the cakes, over which she had ceased reciting the spell. But the other kept on asking and the other answering her, after the same fashion, until the twelve cakes were all used up. Then the "old woman" outside carried them in the sieve upon her head and went off, I know not where. [p. 13.] I was seized with the greatest wonder and astonishment, and on asking for an explanation, was informed that this "prescription" was the cure for a relapse. As for those cakes, the "old woman" would throw them into a disused well that same night. My comment was that in that case there was no necessity for salts of quinine, and I withdrew from their midst leaving them to their folly.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p. 24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756
market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [753] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

755 776 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

● 756 787 [539] 776

"Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife" enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

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because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

Many women

756 in the villages are famed for the "cure" of them. One of them is known as Sitt Umm Ḥusain. She resides in the village of Ibrāhīm Aghā in the district of Shubrakhīt. Her "specific" 757 is to take a piece of the hollow stalk of the bamboo (*ghāb Fārisī*), and split it lengthways down the middle, and place in it the skin of the patient's eyelid. In view of its flexibility it squeezes upon the eyelid and hinders its nourishment, so that it becomes violently inflamed, perhaps extending to the neighbouring parts, and destroying the eye. The result[1] of this ill-omened treatment is that the part squeezed becomes affected [164] with gangrene, the eyelid becomes separated from the eyeball, and the latter becomes exposed to all external influences, great, and small, there being now nothing to protect it from injury, not to mention that the patient through this "operation," becomes ugly and hideous, the sight of him frightening children and offending grown up people.

Many others besides Sitt Umm Ḥuṣain there are who go round the villages rooting out eyelids as if they thought Allah created them unintentionally.

XXVIII

HEALING OF THOSE BORN BLIND (CATARACTOUS)

757 A NATIVE of Mandūra in the Gharbīya Province claims that 298 he has done some of the things for which Jesus (on whom be peace !) was noted, and has made the blind to see (or, rather, to describe him by what results from his works, he gives those who have eyes, eyes to see). What he does is, he anoints the ophthalmic patient with *koḥl*, which he makes himself, and in ten days he is "cured."

I was informed by one of the leading people of the Buḥaira Province about some antimony [*koḥl*] which he bought from

[1] [Dr. A. F. MacCallan, writing in the *Egyptian Gazette* (April 7th, 1927) on the development of Ophthalmology in early Arabic Literature mentions this popular Fellahin "cure," and adds: "*The trichiasisentropion is occasionally cured* (by this method), *but always at the expense of a shortened upper lid, and the frequent production of lagophthalmos.*" Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

EF 756 755

the medical sciences, but were all liable to be duped by him. One of his claims was that he could extract the heart and the liver and replace them by the corresponding parts of a dog. We rejected this statement on account of its absurdity and want of agreement with the canons of medicine. When he saw our opposition he said, "Do not wonder at that for I have cured this last year 40,000 [p. 59] patients suffering from *ascites abdominalis* in Mecca alone." Then we became more sceptical than ever of his statements seeing that the whole population of Mecca is not more than 60,000, and two thirds of them have not always this disease. That would be absurd. So, when he rose to go, he invited a number of us to accompany him, amongst whom was as it happened that excellent Doctor 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Efendī Fahmī, chief physician of the Government Hospital at Assiut, and Doctor 'Abdallāh Efendī Shaukat, head of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital.

When we arrived at his house we found him the centre of the afflicted and the refuge of the unfortunate. Crowds streamed towards his dwelling from every side so that they blocked the way for the passer-by. When we were seated he began "treating" his patients. This was after he had laid aside his robes and put on others which made him look like the successor of Al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada.[1] Among the crowd he had a girl afflicted with filthy suppurating scrofulous glands, so he called on his servant Ṣiddīḳ to prepare a poultice of *lait caillé* (*leben zebādī* or *yaghourt*). Then he himself brought forward a dish from which he took out a little powder of sweet marjoram which he scattered on the poultice, and put this on the neck of the poor girl, whose mother took her away to where she might roll about on account of the burning pain (after she had satisfied the monetary demands of the professed physician).

EF [164] 278

Anyone who is acquainted with science knows that it is not possible to guard against the harmful effects of gathered pus except by extracting it by means of surgical instruments.

EF 756 278

After the sick-visitation had come to an end we went up with him that he might show us his chamber of drugs. We found it a spacious place with hundreds of vessels containing

[1] [See note above p. 43.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

EF 756 878

drugs, salts and acids and alkalis with labels, on which were written their names in Latin, in very indistinct letters on account of their age. The bystander could not help suspecting that this was merely the leavings of some pharmacist, which this man had bought up after the death of the owner.

On turning my head to the right I saw written on one of these bottles "sulphuric acid," so I asked his lordship about the contents of the bottle, in order to try him, that it might put an end to my suspicions regarding him. He answered straightway, "This is oil of mandragora, or apples of the Jinn." Then he produced a vessel gilded on the outside and said, "This is the *Koḥl* (stibium) of the Forty. It puts and end to obscuration of the surface of the eye, and I produced it myself by boiling it in oil of rose mixed with the grease of serpents forty times." He generously presented each of us with some to experiment with, but when we had left his dwelling we threw what was in our hands on the ground, except one of us who was determined to try it. He put a little of it in his eye, and the next day was afflicted with ophthalmia of the cornea which took him fifteen days' treatment to get over its evil effects.

Mark the difference, O you who are intelligent and skilful, between the dwelling of this ignoramus aping the physician and [p. 61] the clinic of one of our keen native doctors. You will find the difference distinctly visible. While the former rejoices in success and prosperity, the latter suffers ill-luck and neglect.

XXX

HEADACHE (ṢUDĀ')[1]

F 164 753

THIS is applied to many illnesses, but is only rarely an original illness. It arises from decay in the bone of the occiput,

[1] [Professor E. G. Browne, in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine* mentions (p. 4) that this noun of pain appears in the Latin version of the Ḳānūn of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) as Soda (*Sermo universalis de Soda*), a term which must have bewildered those without the Arabic original. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXI

SCIATIC NERVE ('IRḲ AL-INS)

By this they mean sciatica (*'irḳ al-nisā*), or nervous pains 164
chiefly in the hip. The causes of this disease are many, such 753
as hereditary venereal disease (which is cured by its own medicines) and the effect of cold and inflammation in the sciatic nerve, or inflammation of the spinal cord.

[p. 65.] One of those who were famous for the " treatment " 755
of this disease was a man of the people of Edkū [near Alexandria [756]
in Lower Egypt]. He takes his patient in the early morning outside the town until they come to a wide plain in which the box-thorn[1] grows. (It is a kind of shrub). He then chooses as much of it as equals the size of the patient's side, and recites over it charms[2] which he keeps on repeating for a long time. After that he scrapes aside the sand which surrounds its root, and when it is uncovered, he pulls it up. He next goes to a fire, which he had previously kindled, and in which are iron pins. He then begins cauterizing the bush in every one of its joints while all the time he is busily reciting. At the end of all these processes, he digs up some earth, buries the shrub, and the patient is " cured."

The explanation given of these " cures " is that sciatica is a 753
disease due to the influence of the *Jinn*, and the charming 755
drives out the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, and imprisons him in the shrub, while the cauterizing of this kills him inside it. It is marvellous that persons of any enlightened intelligence should absolutely refuse the treatment of physicians and betake themselves to this man who is just like all other quacks. He orders the patient not to publish the secret, for if he do, the disease will return worse than before. I was told this story by a friend who was thrown into this man's hands by fate. And the extraordinary [p. 66] part of the story is that [158]
imagination had obtained such a hold over him on account of

[1] [Arabice, *'ausag*, Latine, *Ausegum*. See M. Steinschneider, *Heilmittelnamen der Araber*, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, xii, 222. Tr.]

[2] [*'Azā'im*, plural of *'Azima*.]

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḳ*, plural of *gōḳa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Ḥuseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could
have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list
of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 648 648

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk
863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, he girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an
[827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia
[157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757] ●
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [758]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

juice and salt, and a few minutes later drops a mixture of *tūtia*[1] and honey under the lids. It is believed that after this the inflammation will quickly disappear. 757 278

In another village farther south there is also a woman who is regarded as an eye-specialist, and her knowledge of her art, together with one of the objects she employs, has been handed down in her family for two or three generations, so she told me. She has a large shell, called in Arabic *maḥāreh*, and a black stone called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). She makes eye-medicine by first wetting the inner, concave surface of the shell, and then rubbing it with the stone (Fig. 122). She thus produces a white liquid which the peasants call 'milk.' They believe, as does the woman herself, that this 'milk' comes from the stone, whereas it comes, of course, from the powdering of the surface of the shell by rubbing the stone against it. The liquid is believed to be an excellent medicine for sore eyes, and people in her village who are suffering from that complaint visit the woman and get her to drop some of her medicament into their eyes. This eye-medicine is known in other parts of Egypt 757 755

[754]

278 755

FIG. 122. THE FEMALE EYE-SPECIALIST HOLDING HER SHELL AND BLACK STONE, WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW

[1] Sulphate of zinc.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

F 278 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

755 [789] [855]

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH 753 757 278

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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753 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once
757 only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every
978 day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then
[764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

978 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried
757 in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a little longer.

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon [illegible] the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, [illegible]ording to my informant, a

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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lot of water will come from the eye, and then it will be found that all the inflammation has disappeared. 757 278

The Arabs have a custom of attempting to cure sores, headaches, and other complaints by branding with red-hot nails. A man came to me on one occasion with a terrible skin disease on his hands and wrists. An Arab had burnt him in several places across both wrists, and these burns, having become septic, had, of course, made him much worse. I dressed his hands every day till I left the village, by which time he was much better. 757 171

A similar remedy is sometimes employed for fever or for nervous disorder. A fire of cow-dung (the ordinary household fuel) is lit, and some iron nails are placed in it till they are red-hot. The patient then squats on the ground with his arms tightly folded in front, and a man holds him securely in this attitude. Another man removes a nail from the fire, and with it burns one or two places on the back of the patient's neck. The nervous trouble supposed to be cured by this means is that caused by seeing an apparition in the fields at night or by some other alarming manifestation. One is inclined to speculate on the state of the patient's nerves *after* undergoing this exceedingly painful treatment! 757 [372]

The following is a cure for a broken bone. Some gum is obtained from an acacia-tree, and, after being pounded and passed through a fine sieve, is mixed with water. This mixture is spread on a piece of thick brown paper, which is then placed immediately over the injured part of the body. It is left in this position for a week, when it is removed, for by that time it is believed that the broken bone will have united again. 752 278

When visiting the market on market-day at one village I saw a man seated a short distance from the crowds of buyers and sellers. On approaching him I found that children suffering from very sore and inflamed eyes were being brought to him by their mothers. On examining the eyes of a child he remarked, "Yes, he has got them," and told the mother, who was sitting on the ground in front of him, to hold the child face-downward. He then placed one hand on the back of the child's head, and with the other he gently rubbed its eyes (Fig. 126). Almost immediately numbers of tiny grubs fell from them on to the ground, where I saw them wriggling about. He did this with each child in turn, usually with the same result. I have seen him remove grubs from the eyes of children on more than one occasion, and I have never been able 757

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded.

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

C
793
756

THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

F
232
759

The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

F
[957]
[291]

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

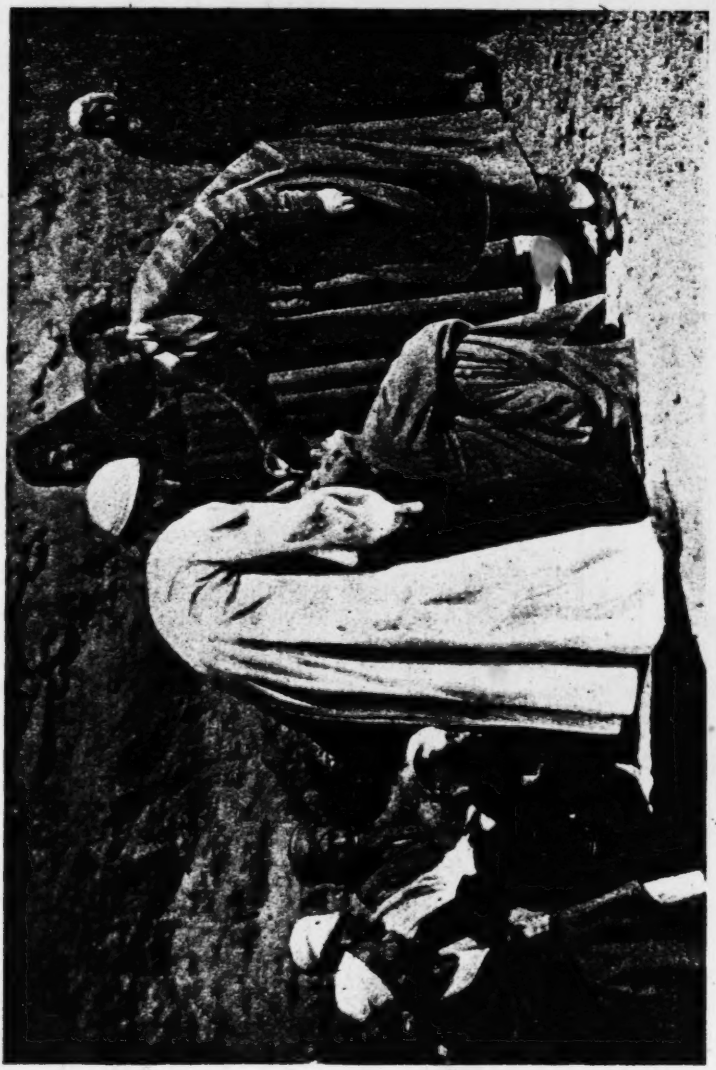
F
119
123

When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

F
[957]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt



757
114
291
123

FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

[page 215]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

757 114 123 case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

[232] [291]

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

744 743 Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 755 789

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775] 776 [779]

G [412] 243

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ſty*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ſbḏw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sˁw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *ʿafrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told[5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr[8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-ʿAmarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers,
and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without
them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for
as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have
taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels
an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice
or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swell-
ings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment
clearly depends on what plants they have within reach,
and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

These peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (44) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these
sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid
on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain
condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on
the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no
point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing ori-
ginal in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole
of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond
Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of
the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fella-
heen are even more effective than their manner of life in
isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which
'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he
founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself
weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these
ritual observances.

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five 747
young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (").872
"Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village.

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's [757] and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist. On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash.

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but [524] it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules."

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, 747
and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts

I

THE TAḲRĪFA

THIS is common in the villages and in most of the cities. 164
It affects the person afflicted with *ḳarfa*, which is chronic
intestinal catarrh. The manner of treatment is such that it 757
forces upon the sick person strict dieting, so that he only eats 755
a little bread with salt and pepper after midday. In the
morning he goes daily to the "old woman" who seats him
before her with his lower extremities extended, while she
remains behind him stretching her limbs out in the same way.
Then she squeezes him with her hands against her chest, and
rubs his stomach with increasing violence. After all this she
squeezes his head, for the space of half an hour, with great
force, the result of which is often death. She does all this
without heeding or fearing evil consequences.

And would that she were satisfied with what she has now
done after this manner! But now she brings a piece [p. 9] of
cloth which she wraps round the neck of the patient (the dumb
animal! nay, the deaf stone!) and chokes him until he loses
consciousness. She thinks nothing of this, although such an
"operation" often results in the death of the wretched patient.
(We may seek to excuse her by saying that it is not her fault.
because the rules of the "prescription" force her to do it)
Next she repeats that operation many times in succession and
ends up by giving the patient half a lemon dipped in a mixture [278]
of oven ashes, salt and black pepper. Sometimes the invalid
has to endure this for a full month.

As for the diet, it is the best part of the medicine; but there 756
is no merit in that due to the old woman, because she does not 755
order it with the intention of healing the sick, but to make the
rubbing of his stomach easy for herself. The extraordinary
thing is that she asserts that the whole of the benefit is in the

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

THIS word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

comes to her, and he has taken it into his head that he is 757 ● suffering from piles, he offers her whatever money fate has bestowed on him, and she requites him with an "operation," of which the following is a description. She takes between the tips of her fingers a special preparation which she puts in the *anus* of the patient. Next she moistens her fingers with oil and puts them a second time into the *rectum* (*mustaḳīm*) until when she has succeeded in mixing the oil with the first special prepartion, she draws out her hand, which has become smeared with coagulated blood, resulting from the morbid local inflammation. As a result the wretched patient thinks that these bloody lumps are the piles, and so it is noised abroad in the mouths of the populace of that village and those adjoining it, that such a woman tears out piles by the roots, pulling them out in her hand like the liver of fowls.

Sometimes the patient finds relief for a day or two after this "operation" because, for one thing, the oil softens the local inflammation referred to above, and, for another thing, the woman by inserting her hand into the *anus* sets up an expansion of the sphincter (*'āṣira*). So the patient for these two reasons finds a slight relief from suffering. But this method is obviously fraught with injury, especially if the reader knows that the source of the dysentery is in the germs which the "doctress" carries and with which she infects the patient.

I once heard a government official say that being afflicted 759 with piles, he was recommended to a man called the Shaikh Aḥmad al-Khaṭṭābī in [p. 19] the Khurunfish district of Cairo who was famous for the treatment of this disease. The latter treated him for three weeks, at the end of which the trouble and the pain ceased. I bethought myself of coming face to face with this man, in order to make his acquaintance and derive benefit from him. In fact, I went to him three times on three successive days and entreated him both for myself and for many of his companions, that he might enlighten me about the secret of the medicine, and take me as one of his pupils. To this he consented, but only after he had put me on 757 my oath that I would not divulge his secret to any doctor or layman; besides (he added) if I did reveal it to anyone, it would lose all its virtue and be useless. Thereupon he brought out a

4;Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

957 paper containing some powder and said, "I make plasters of this antidote (*tiriāḳ*), and place them upon the piles; then they are cured by the permission of Allah." I took a little of it between the tips of my fingers, and on examination found it to be orpiment (*rahg*) one of the compounds of deadly caustic arsenic (*zarnīkh*) which the common people call "ratsbane" (*samm al-fār*).[1]

"*We took it, reckoning it pure gold, but the blacksmith's bellows revealed the vileness of the iron.*"

Anyone who has the least smattering of the science of medicine knows that this element is caustic. Barely have a few days passed after using it before a man endures considerable pain, and when he recognises the source of his mistake and the consequences of his foolish belief, he is filled with remorse.

VII

SUNSTROKE (BAṬḤAT—AL-SHAMS)

953 THIS is cerebral congestion from the effect of the solar rays, and the manner of its treatment according to the method of
955 the "old wives" is, that the key of a door which faces towards the east, and is opened counter-clockwise is procured. (There must be found [p. 21] in every village at least one house fulfilling these two conditions). The "old woman" takes this key, procures woollen cords (or braces) and wraps them round the head of the patient, using the key which is in her other hand to accomplish this. In this way she keeps on bracing these cords until she can do no more. All this while the patient behaves like a bereaved woman, lamenting, and calling out, and crying for mercy, but there is none to pity. Next the "old woman" begins massaging the patient's head. I have seen her with my own eyes after all these operations, biting the skin of the patient's forehead between the eyebrows, in a fierce manner even to the effusion of blood. For she believes that the bones of the patient's head have become

[1] [Arsenic trisulphide. Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
757 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
796 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

Many women
756 in the villages are famed for the "cure" of them. One of them is known as Sitt Umm Ḥusain. She resides in the village of Ibrāhīm Aghā in the district of Shubrakhīt. Her "specific" 757 is to take a piece of the hollow stalk of the bamboo (*ghāb Fārisī*), and split it lengthways down the middle, and place in it the skin of the patient's eyelid. In view of its flexibility it squeezes upon the eyelid and hinders its nourishment, so that it becomes violently inflamed, perhaps extending to the neighbouring parts, and destroying the eye. The result[1] of this ill-omened treatment is that the part squeezed becomes affected [164] with gangrene, the eyelid becomes separated from the eyeball, and the latter becomes exposed to all external influences, great, and small, there being now nothing to protect it from injury, not to mention that the patient through this "operation," becomes ugly and hideous, the sight of him frightening children and offending grown up people.

Many others besides Sitt Umm Ḥuṣain there are who go round the villages rooting out eyelids as if they thought Allah created them unintentionally.

XXVIII

HEALING OF THOSE BORN BLIND (CATARACTOUS)

757 A NATIVE of Mandūra in the Gharbīya Province claims that 278 he has done some of the things for which Jesus (on whom be peace!) was noted, and has made the blind to see (or, rather, to describe him by what results from his works, he gives those who have eyes, eyes to see). What he does is, he anoints the ophthalmic patient with *koḥl*, which he makes himself, and in ten days he is "cured."

I was informed by one of the leading people of the Buḥaira Province about some antimony [*koḥl*] which he bought from

[1] [Dr. A. F. MacCallan, writing in the *Egyptian Gazette* (April 7th, 1927) on the development of Ophthalmology in early Arabic Literature mentions this popular Fellahin "cure," and adds: "*The trichiasisentropion is occasionally cured* (by this method), *but always at the expense of a shortened upper lid, and the frequent production of lagophthalmos.*" Tr.]

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *kohl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarītī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]
(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *shūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *kohl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awshar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]
[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]
[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *habbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XII*, 207. Tr.]

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

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757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [906] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [989] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The "operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabibī*. Tr.]

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Study and research have shown that the cases in which the "treatment" of the *Fargān* proved successful were caused by dogs that were not rabid. It happened one day that a dog bit a man who was passing by. This man went to the encampment of the *Fargān* in search of healing. They "treated" him with cautery like the others. Not many days elapsed until there appeared in him symptoms of real hydrophobia, and night and day he was heard barking shrilly, behaving like a dog in all his actions, while his teeth were gnashing in terror. In this state he continued for a space, then he died.

Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the claim made by the *Fargān*, they have only to bring their proofs and, when their assertion is substantiated, we shall be satisfied with the glory that our common people are better than the élite of Western savants. But when we consider the matter we find that such high skill in the healing art is not achieved as a favour, but by habitual toil and industry. And the physician Pasteur, whose fame has filled the two hemispheres, did not gain his immense wealth and widespread reputation, except by devoting his life to the discovery of what he achieved in the treatment of this disease (namely, hydrophobia) after its cure was (thought) impossible. The French government built for him at their own expense a special hospital to which patients go from all quarters of the inhabited world. As for Egypt we do not forget that the Khedivial Government has sent, for the past six years, five of those afflicted with hydrophobia [p. 72] to Paris to be benefited by healing at the hand of that famous physician. So if the *Fargān* are to be trusted in what they assert, why then are they niggardly in publishing the truth, and averse to the praiseworthy place in History that would be theirs on their revealing it?

Long ago, Galen said that those bitten by dogs benefited by being given daily a drachm of burned powder of river crabs, and the illness would cease after forty days.

The doctors of India use for those afflicted with hydrophobia a draught of the Indian *Ḥuḍaḍ* or *Ḥaḍaḍ*, a drachm of it upon an empty stomach for forty days, then the hydrophobia will cease. But it is not of the slightest advantage except it be accompanied by, what the *Fargān* do in our country, "ironing"

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

it was taken up by a society in Europe. But the truth is clear that those who thus imitated the "old wives" of Egypt were only seeking after some new and wonderful thing so that people might make a fuss about them. They were denounced by the scientific world of Europe, until they desisted from their error.

XXXVII

"THORN OF THE WIND" SHŌKAT-AL-RĪḤ

THIS is a name used generally in the villages for decay (caries) of the bones of the phalanges of the foot or hand, and the accompaniment of this decay with violent inflammation and great swelling. Many people in Buḥaira (Province) have become famous for "curing" it, the best known of them being the Shaikh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. He has two "treatments" for this, one, old, namely, that the finger of the patient should be burnt with a circular cauterization; the other, new, namely, that the sinews of the muscles should be cut and rooted out along with a part of the substance of the fingers. It is asserted that this latter "method" makes a more radical cure than the former because it is in agreement with modern science. The harm is not confined, however, to the cutting and rooting out of the sinews, but his recommendation to the patient not to wash his wound with water [p. 80] saying that water is "the poison of wounds."

Some people employ a poultice of doves' dung, as I saw last year, for a youth presented himself to me during my stay in the provinces, and on examination I found the nail-phalanx necrotic. So I extracted it and he was well after a few days, though he had remained for sixty days before having it out, enduring in it all kinds of torment.

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XXXVIII

SKIN DISEASES AND SNAKE-CHARMERS

THE common people think that *impetigo* or skin-disease (*karfa*) originates from the fact that the viper blows its poison into the body. For that reason those afflicted betake themselves to the snake-charmers [Rifā'ī Dervishes] and the viper-enchanters [Sa'danī Dervishes].[1] As for the latter, they are the lowest roughs who claim that they have complete authority over serpents and vipers. So they charm by means of oil, that is, they spit into it, and anoint the patient with this oil for the space of three days. Then he is "cured." And it is [p. 81] a vain assertion and worthless belief because scientific and practical experiments prove that the poison of these reptiles does not cause harm except when it touches the blood. The savant Bouchard swallowed capsules containing large quantities of it. They were very nourishing. It is mentioned that the degree of their nourishment was like that of the white of eggs.

And if we see the oil of the charmers sometimes benefiting in the case of *karfa*, that is only because this disease, like some skin diseases, demands for its successful treatment extreme caution against atmospheric injuries, that is, the influence of the outside air. When oil is smeared on, the layer of smearing forms a sort of barrier between them. So no wonder the patient is cured and relieved from the fetter of the disease. For the oil in this case produces softening in the crusts of the skin-disease, then they fall off of themselves. And it is not, as the *Sa'danī* and other triflers assert that this results from their control over serpents. Because if they were speaking the truth, why do they let the serpents injure people at all, and harm mankind with their ill-doing?

[1] [See article by translator on *The Gypsies of Modern Egypt* in the *Moslem World*, July, 1933, p. 289.]

753 But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
152 cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared
861 especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers [562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

757 " AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they ' prescribed ' incensing,
Which an " old wife " among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication ?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation ?
And does their ' incensing ' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton ? "

Some of the " old wives " in the provinces were famed in past ages for their " cure " of venereal disease by " incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An " old wife " came to " incense " a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from [164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the " incensing " of the " doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkha*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

The manner of it is this: The "old wife" orders the windows of the sick room to be closed first of all. Next she orders him not to eat anything but thin bread and honey during the space of ten days. On the eleventh day a large fire is kindled in the sick room [p. 84] and the "old wife" places on it her incense (which consists of pieces of sulphate of natural mercury) that is, cinnabar [*zungafr*, or sulphuret of mercury]. There goes up a thick vapour which fills the emptiness of the room. Then the "old wife" leaves her patient and goes out quickly that his punishment may be endured in solitude, since he inhales the quick poison of the fumes of the quicksilver flying about. I was informed by a trustworthy person that one patient died after two hours of the "fumigating," though, before it, he was fairly well, his illness not being dangerous or fatal. This mistake is common in all the districts of Egypt. And no matter how the "old wife's" methods or herbs may vary, they do not produce the desired effect nor any part of it, unless indeed the object of destruction. It is suitable, in the most expeditious manner, for that.

XLI

'ISHBA

As some obtain a "cure" by incense, others, both men and women, dispense with medicine by means of '*ishba* (sarsaparilla), which is too well-known to be named here, even children know it by heart, for they think that in it is a divine secret opposed to syphilis. But they are wrong, seeing that is has no use at all to-day as far as we know. Some people reckon it itself and sassafras, and guaiacum [lit. "wood of the prophets"] to be of the herbs causing sweat, but in my opinion, tea is better than any of them.

It is quite certain that the bulk of the *fellāḥīn* in these days know the truth of what we have said, because of its inefficacy, and that they have turned aside from it. Nowadays they know

another thing; you will see them coming to the cities and asking in hospitals or pharmacies for it [p. 85] by the name of *yadūr*, meaning potassium iodide. Yes, they are right as to its being beneficial, but not in all attacks of syphilis, seeing that it is proved that it is not the least use in the first two attacks. (And in particular they do not know syphilis from anything else, for they are ignorant of the diagnosis of the disease and consequently miss the cure.)

We have previously hinted at a remedy for syphilis. But in general there is no escape from consulting a physician. The patient who fears for his family, or the family who fear for him, should hasten to get away from the disease, since it is contagious.

XLII

"MIXING" (MADHAḲ)

Madhaḳ literally means "mixing."[1]

(And in truth they are *mixed* when they err in its treatment.) It is [a name] applied in the villages to a kind of muscular swelling (or rheumatism) which strikes the muscle under the shoulder-blade, and the muscle below the spine sometimes. And they "prescribe" for him who is smitten with it, that he should lean against the door of a room facing the East, with his feet above and his head below, and meeting the ground with his palms so that the weight of his body will be upon them. And he must have filled his mouth with water, and must remain in this position about ten minutes at least, until he becomes giddy (from congestion of the brain) and throws himself to the ground. The harm of this "method" is obvious and useless [p. 86] except to make those who do it like monkeys. Perhaps the patient overturns on to his back or falls upon his *pia mater* [*Arabice* (أم الرأس) "*mother of the head*"], *and* there receives the reward of his act, or the result of his folly and his inability to imitate others.

[1] [This "mixing" or ambiguity cannot be translated.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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XLIII

THE HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS AND POISONS

ALL internal diseases for which the "old wife" is not enabled to perfect a trick to impose on the intellects of the people of the provinces, she attributes in her diagnosis to *Sukwa* [see below]. She says to the patient: "Oh, my son, you have *Sukwa* and nothing will be of any avail except the horn of the rhinoceros, which must be placed in a china vessel and exposed to the dew all night and drunk upon an empty stomach in the morning."

Now the "horn of the rhinoceros" (*karn al-khartīt*) consists of pieces of the horns of cows or of buffaloes. Pilgrims or merchants from the Sudan bring them and spin the tale how that they are the antidote (*tiriāk*) for poisons. Whereas even if they were rhinoceros horns, as they assert, there are no special beneficial qualities in them at all, as far as we know. But it is well known that the volatile salts of the English are extracted from the horns of the hart, or [p. 87] mountain buck, but that is not the rhinoceros. Whereas if we imagined, as they do, that these two are one and the same, they would not have brought a conclusive proof, since on their putting the horn in water the salt in it does not melt so as to be of benefit. But what we do know is that the volatile salts of the English are no good in counteracting poisons (except alcoholic poisoning or intoxication).

It is well-known that the word *Sukwa* is applied generally to pulmonary consumption accompanied by loss of blood on coughing. The patient must be well-fed, and guarded as much as possible from cold. He must leave the place where he caught it for dry warm places, and keep away from crowds and not neglect moderate exercise. And let his people guard against allowing him to spit upon articles or on the ground. (For if they knew that the poison that the "old wife" shuns is expectorated with the saliva, and that healthy people breathe it and fall into the clutches of Death, they would beware of the evil consequences. So let them know that it is one of the most

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

164 757 753 violent of contagious diseases and the hardest to cure). Therefore let them have him spit into a handkerchief or a piece of linen, which is then dipped in tar and afterwards burned.

His relatives should call in a doctor to visit him. It is well 757 164 known that menfolk do not reckon themselves ill unless they are confined to their rooms and unable to stir out of doors, that is, when the illness has become chronic and incurable. Whereas if it had been receiving attention it would not have been thus, except after a very long time, and at the beginning it would have been possible to repel it with ease. Frequently we have seen people suffering from pulmonary consumption, and in spite of that [p. 88] the answer of one of them to us when we asked him about his disease, was: "Allah forbid, I am not diseased." But before long we see the disease contradicting him, and he is confined to his house. And most of them are fated to die of these diseases for this reason.

757 744 It is encumbent on those who are consumptive to attend to the disease at the outset. But I fancy them saying, "And where can we find a doctor to consult every time; the cities are distant, and perhaps we go to consult a doctor and can't find him." I say, it is an easy matter. If the people of the villages desire to have a special doctor for themselves to cure them gratis, without their going to him, and to be at their command, they have only to take the trouble to ask him from the Government on condition that each one of them pays one millième per month (as His Excellency 'Alī Mubārak Pāshā reckoned) and as we demonstrated more than once in the well-known newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*.[1]

XLIV

PAIN OF THE SHIKKA

164 THIS is generally applied to diseases of the spinal marrow and colic of the stomach and kidneys. They "prescribe" for 755 757 the sick that two men should carry him by the head and feet

[1] [See Hartmann: *op. cit. index.*]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the ass, and one of the " doctors " beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the " sagacious ones " enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of " quacks " in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (سطوح النارنج).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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757 Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

754 " WHEN the envier casts his evil eye,
152 Bring fire and *shabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
888 And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: 'Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Middle East-Arabic Period-M3 Egypt MR1

demolished the religion of his people, and affirmed that religions were false. He was busily engaged in the other parts of his life with the particularities of names, and magic and astrology and the alchemy of gold. I mean by him the famous Voltaire. So why do we ignore these and say: "We Easterners were, and do not cease to be, in a manifest error?" In general we find in Egypt many worthless persons, who have no work, addicted to the worship of some leaves which they deem to be treasures of great value (but their value is but madness, if they only knew it). You see them bringing numerous substances to produce the concoction, and keep on kindling fires under it until it all flies off in smoke. Then, when they do not find anything except a little dust inside the crucible, they think that they have made a mistake, so they begin the work again and again, and so on till their cash is lost, and their lives are like scattered dust. And while their money is coming to an end they are pouncing upon the ignorant with their imbecility, and they waste the remainder of their substance as the Treasure Diviners [see above] have done. This evil is found in cities more than in villages. I know many of the well-known families in Cairo, whose wealth was brought to an end through "the extraction of gold."

LIII

DECEIT UNDER THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION

[p. 104.] We now come to the laxity and forgery that are blended with the medicine of to-day, and what makes it fanciful or seemingly so, just as we mentioned the description of the men and women of the Past. Therefore, we say that there is no doubt that the sciences have advanced to-day since yesterday. Let us leave aside the distant past to be judged by the future. We do not know in which of the two science advanced more. A great number of intelligent people hold the opinion that time was when the sciences were more advanced than to-day.

The truth is that most of the works of mankind to-day

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

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proclaim that those holding this opinion are right without a mistake. Those who consider the doctors of the present generation, whose opnions clash and whose views disagree and whose drugs differ, are bewildered and know not which of them is right and which of them is mistaken. The person who considers the book which is printed in all languages as a commentary on the Elixir of Judenau (?) (جودنو) and sees that it cures all incurable illnesses in a short space, and who uses the "cure" for years and does not obtain the slightest advantage, becomes in his distress enraged against physic and physicians. Every invalid who turns the pages of this bulky book repeats what is written, viz., "By the use of six glasses of this Elixir the invalid will be cured of pulmonary consumption." Afterwards his glance falls upon an article as follows: "The Journal *France Moderne* reports: 'All the medical sciences acknowledge that this Elixir cures all heart diseases, meningitic inflammation, and diseases of the arteries and decay of the bones' to which it adds a rider: 'It prolongs life when used in a suitable way.' (The patient) has recourse to this elixir which he does not cease to use [p. 105] while the malady increases in strength, and its course is swift, until he dies a natural death, and then he learns the truth that these statements are false.

We were astonished at the person who came to Egypt during the past year and began announcing in the public streets to the effect that the medicine of "*Sīkwā*" (سيكوا) was the only cure for deafness, blindness, rickets, consumption, piles, and all incurable illnesses. It is obvious to anyone watching that person seated in a carriage embellished with gold, adorned with mirrors, drawn by a pair of fleet horses and surrounded by a band of musicians, while he himself is proclaiming that the famous *Sīkwā* is leaving Egypt on the morrow, that Galen was risen from the grave, and that this was a suitable chance of gaining possession of his remedy.

Doubtless intelligent people were not deceived by the like of these profitless manifestations. But the strangest of them is what we see printed in the columns of our local journals under the name *Salwar* (or *Salūr*) (سلور), whose beneficial pills are well known as a "cure" for many illnesses.

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But the chief marvel of his shrewdness was when he heard about the belief of the Egyptians in empirics, and sent them pills to cure them, and began proposing to them things which, if they abstained from them, would alone be sufficient to restore their health. He prescribes bathing in cold water every morning and abstaining completely from drinking or smoking as well as the eating of food half cooked, although if every sick person considered these things he would not need the "cure" of "His Excellency the Servant of Humanity." Those who know science, or who study medicine, wonder exceedingly at the ignorance of teachers and authors who assert: "They (i.e. the doctors) are unable to cure many diseases. They submit to the judgment of their inability to overcome diseases when the *Elixir of* [p. 106] *Judenau* and the drink of *Sīkwā* and the pills of *Salwar* cure all."

You also see European Pharmacies, especially, and drug-stores, filled with compounds prepared in Europe—"specialities"—for "curing" those sick of such and such an infirmity after so many days' use. If they were genuine then what would be the advantage to invalids in crying out for doctors to pursue medical research? All they would have to do would be to resort to these compounds and dispense with all else.

The patient with any chest trouble, for example, would simply use *Īrīz Pills* (حبوب ايريز) which, they say, cure all chest disorders.

The patient troubled with V.D., for example, would resort to the *Drink Jībīr* (جبير). It is said to stop all turns, in spite of their different character.

Now are these people really serving mankind by means of their remedies, or are these matters quite devoid of truth, or are they intended for another purpose?

In fact, they are only the errors of swindlers or the snares of those to whom we can commonly apply the name of lawful thieves, a clique who appear in the midst of the throng and the struggle for life and are reduced in spite of themselves to obtaining riches and wealth from any source, provided there is no law to restrain them and no one to prevent them. This is the rule of the new civilization and the modern manner of life.

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aṣwānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khaḍra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shisha*.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places.

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows.

In the Gharbīya province, in a village called *Kafr Khidr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Ṭanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight.

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III

RHEUMATISM AND DONKEY MARROW

ONE of the ancient "prescriptions" successfully used for *Ḥidār* of the joints (i.e. rheumatism) is taking the marrow from the feet of a dead donkey and rubbing it on the part affected for seven days. They go to extremes in the matter until the patient is compelled to bring it from remote regions, after his family have set spies and observers in all the villages to inform them of the death of a donkey, male or female. Sometimes they employ the fat of a camel or serpent.

The true explanation. It is possible that in the spinal substance of the donkey's bone there may be a soothing element, which the learned have not yet discovered. But it is very improbable that there is an element counteracting or removing inflammation, since a patient told me that that marrow is not exciting or burning, but that it is like ordinary fat. Perhaps it may here have some effect on muscular rheumatism, but in [p. 15] the case of rheumatism of the joints it is of little use.

IV

THE UNIQUE ELEMENT (AL-GŌHAR AL-FARD)

THOSE who go back to what we wrote in the first part (page 24) concerning piles and dysentery (*rīḥ al-mash'ūmāt*) will know the secret of those fancies in the villages. But today the crowds of quacks are not satisfied with propagating their errors in the villages, but they go so far as to publish the same in the newspapers. I read in an Arabic newspaper an advertisement by a man called Abū 'Ujaiza of the village of Fisha, residing in the dwelling of Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl in Ṭanṭā. He "cures" piles in the space of three days, at least,

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him!). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabak*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

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old "method" which is only of advantage to its practitioner, who lives comfortably in the shadow of its effect on the minds of simpletons.

X

THE "CURE" FOR ULCERS

164

THE "old wife" prescribes for the patients who are suffering from chronic ulcers (*nawāṣīr*) having fetid purulent secretions, the following "prescription": Mix one part of snuff (or tobacco dust) with one part of natron (its usual name [p. 22] is *atrūn*, and it is sesquicarbonate of soda). Pour on them two parts of very pure olive-oil and boil the whole for a while. Then anoint the tube of the ulcer (*nāṣūr*) and it will be cured.

759

Some excellent people have attested to me that it is a "cure" that has been proved by actual observation to be advantageous. It may be that time will show the truth of this experiment and beneficial remedy. But it is well known to-day that there is no cure for ulcers except scraping them with special instruments, or erasing the ulcerous tube, thus removing the cause, and sewing up the new wound. Sometimes cautery with a heated probe, or an electric cauterizer is employed.

Explanation of the "prescription." The snuff is a cauterizer, and on its entering the wounds it awakens their vitality, which has been weakened by the passage of time, and it changes the nature of the vile secretions for the better. Then fleshy pieces grow up filling the cavity of the ulcerous tube. (But that only results on the supposition that an ulcer is found continuing after the removal of its cause, such as ulcers resulting from a bullet which has entered a muscle deeply, and remains for some time with the surrounding part suppurating. Then it is extracted and the road leading to its original lodging-place has the appearance of [p. 23] an ulcerous tube. But appearances are not evidence).

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bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

E F 278 759

I WAS one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *mufattaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūḳḳa* or *uḳḳa*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¾ lb. Tr.]

E [804]

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After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*ḥiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

EF [832] [843]

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

F 164 757

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawalli, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawalli* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

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XVII

"WINKING" (ṬARFA)

164 SLIGHT shocks falling upon the eye-ball cause irritation which often leads to a dangerous state on most occasions. All such afflictions arising from an external influence are named by the common people *Ṭarfa*. They have sundry "cures" for it. One of these is effective for the time being. It consists of closing the eyelid and placing the hand outspread above it. Then another person puts his mouth to this hand and blows upon it with his foul breath, deep breaths one after the other. Shortly after we see them ordering the milk of a woman to be brought and a drop placed in the eye. Then it is "cured."

The true explanation. As for the blowing upon the eye, it is of little account, since it has no real influence upon it. But milk has been used since ancient times for placing [p. 33] in the eye for all light irritations which occur therein. It is very good. Many *koḥl* manufacturers still order it even to-day.

The true treatment. The handiest and simplest thing for the patient is to boil a little Greek camomile [*bābūnig Rūmī*] (or "the chickens of 'Ali's mother") and throw into that hot mixture a piece of tissue, which he places at once upon his eye for the space of a quarter of an hour for two hours. Remove all customary eye-salves. There is no harm in using human or animal milk, since it mollifies the inflamed condition. But if the eye is in a serious state, then the first thing is to hasten to an oculist.

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XVIII

A "CURE" FOR ITCH (GARAB)

ITCH is common among children in the elementary schools 164
in the villages on account of the meeting there of the many conditions which help its development, such as dirtiness, moisture and carelessness. They "cure" it in the beginning 1957
by breakfasting every morning on a piece of "camel-driver's sulphur"—(Thus it is known among them. It is natural sulphide)—inside the yolk of an egg. If that is not successful there is the final "cure." The poor child is taken to the sewer of the village mosque [p. 34] and his body besmeared with those putrid substances, which they leave upon him for two complete days. Some of the Shaikhs of the villages exceed the bounds in the efficacy of this "cure." I have seen companies of them leading their boys to the sewer of Sīdī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūḳī at the time of the *Maulid* [or Birthday Festival] to perform with them there. This method is harmful and a hindrance to a real cure.

The true explanation. Nobody denies that compounds of sulphur are beneficial in the curing of all diseases that are named parasitic. But in spite of that there is no escape from observing cleanliness. Treatment by "camel-driver's sulphur" is good—(the sewer method, of course, is a quite different matter)—because the sedimentary substances contained in sulphurous substances touch the affected skin as agents and act strongly. So would that people smeared the body of the child with sulphur instead of with those filthy substances!

XIX

THE "CURE" FOR BALDNESS

THOSE exposed to being smitten by it in the villages are also 164
the children of the elementary schools, because, like the

preceding, it is an infectious parasitic disease, and found in very hideous forms. Through neglect of it, and failure to attend to it at the beginning, it baffles physicians and becomes a danger.

The thoughts of the "old wives" are perplexed regarding its "cure." Some of them order anointing with petrol; others order tar and other substances. All are profitless. The famous method is "the cap of pitch" [*ṭaḳīyat-al-zift*] in other words, making the pitch (which is the resin of certain coniferæ) flow upon the head of the patient hot, in the form of a skull-cap[1] and leaving it for weeks, nay months. Then the quack comes one day to pull off the cap—a day of distress for the patient!—since his hair, nay his skin also, sticks to the pitch. So he suffers tortures, and blood flows after the terrible uproar of pulling off the cap. Very often the patient faints on account of the intensity [p. 36] of the pain and the great loss of blood. Then after that there is brought half an oke[2] of common salt crystals and the head of the patient is rubbed with them violently.

Do not ask about the pains of this savage method. After a month has passed the "operation" is repeated. There is no need to witness it to know that the second "operation" is more grievous than the first because the healing of the wound is not complete and the new skin is pulled off a second time, and the pains are doubled. In view of all this, say whether this method is advantageous with its violence and danger! Even if this method were successful sometimes, the success would be due solely to the exclusion of the air by means of the cap prescribed against the parasite, because it ranks as a parasite called aerobic, that is "air-loving."

[1] [*Ḳalansuwa*, or *ḳulansiya*, the name of a tight-fitting cap often worn under a turban. Tr.]
[2] [See above, p. 111.]

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XX

SHAHKA

F 164

THE "old wives" of the provinces generally use the name *shahka* for the malady of small-pox, which attacks infants and appears in the form of vesicles full of a liquid which is at first pure, then it becomes turbid and bursts. The "old wives" of the provinces and the mothers of the infants assert that the occurrence of these vesicles is caused by a woman or a man glancing at the child with a look of admiration for its beauty, and delight in its loveliness. Then the child falls after that into the state of that illness. Hence it is called *shahka* (injury by the evil eye) or *nazra* (evil glance). They "cure" it, as is well known, by the child's mother stealing from her neighbour a piece of her dough with which she smears those vesicles.

F 753 754

F 757

The true explanation. There is no advantage known in smearing these vesicles with dough. As a matter of fact this method is one belonging to the village pick-pockets and provincial thieves. The history of absurdities preserves it, and transmitters hand it down. [p. 38.] In the beginning of the whole business it was a means of accomplishing the theft of a neighbour's property under the excuse of a "prescription order." For what woman would not give her neighbour a piece of dough to cure her poor child!

XXI

A "HARMLESS" PRESCRIPTION

E 757 758

ONE of the "old wives" prescribed for one of the leading men of Cairo, who complained of a wound in his leg, the following "prescription": Powdered leg of dove [calumba] and greasy wax, the former being thrown into the latter after boiling. After cooling a little, the soft paste is taken and

164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be "cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 ḤASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his 752 numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahīn MR13

(Ḥasan Aghā) seizes this opportunity and smears a pebble 752
(which he had previously prepared [p. 43] with the help of hospital servants or surgical attendants) with the blood of the patient. After certain exertions and the display of a little effort (to complete the deception) he hands over to the patient the stone moist with blood. This is the method of Ḥasan Aghā who obtains enormous wealth in return for his fatigue and service on behalf of the Egyptian world. For his easy circumstances are due to many ignorant folk who are in a worse state than beasts of burden since there is no value in life or health among them. But it is a pity that Ḥasan Aghā 682
is to-day (June, 1894) engaged in prison, since the Government arrested him and the hand of Justice took revenge on him for killing one of the patients in his agency. Do not ask about what grief the people of those parts had when they suffered their famous "surgeon." We wish the excellent Aghā, aforementioned, a good life in penal servitude at Ṭurra[1] and we hope that Allāh will inspire his devotees with intellect to guide them aright thereby, when the calamities of diseases afflict them.

XXVI

THE INJECTION WITH "THE BITTER TOY"

For long we have heard from people about extravagances 757
in the matter of injection, and that it produces fat in those who are lean and slender. When we asked certain people as to the composition of the substances entering into the injection they answered that that was the knowledge of the womenfolk. [p. 44.] Allāh decreed, however, that a certain woman of Cairo came to indicate to me one day what it did to her daughter who complained of the flow of blood with the feces and violent dysentery. So I asked her concerning the cause. She hesitated a little; then she said: I went to an "old wife" famous for injection in order that she might attend to my daughter because she was lean. She produced "*the Bitter Toy*" (*al-la'ba al-mura*) and boiled it in pig's grease for half an hour, and then placed it in a metal syringe, and bade me hold the

[1] [A well-known convict establishment near Cairo. Tr.]

•957 girl firmly and inject the liquid, which was boiling, into her anus. After that she began rolling her upon the tiled floor to smother her screams on account of the intensity of the pain. She fainted and we sprinkled water on her face. She has been ill ever since that day.

The true explanation. We do not know whether " the bitter toy " is what is named " bitter sweet " (*al-ḥulwa al-murra*)[1] or not. But on the supposition that it is, then we do not know of its possessing these peculiarities. We do not deny that the injection of fats and certain extremely greasy substances into the rectum has attained a certain repute in creating nourishment on account of the quickness of its absorption by a power greater than that of the stomach. But this savage method, namely, its injection at boiling-point, we have never heard of except in Egypt. No wonder she is the Mother of Wonders !

[p. 45.] In this place we call upon those who care to preserve the bloom and nourishment of their bodies not to follow the counsels of the " old wives," but to abandon those old absurdities. Let them be recorded in the history of the Past, because by placing them in history there is built up a new age. And especially (does this apply to) the inhabitants of Cairo, who claim nowadays to be humane and civilized.

[1] [Or *Dulcamara.* Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

10.

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778
823

The Well Zemzem.

The well Zemzem is the miraculous well in the Mosque of Mekka. Pilgrims drink from it and are accustomed to carry vials of its water home with them. In a very similar song of Dalman's (P. 8; from Ḥawāra in Aglûn in Palestine) the Zemzem well is addressed, but it means a girl. Perhaps our song is also to be thus understood.

Ya bīrî Zemzem, salabik selāsil,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lim-mesāfir.
Ya bīrî Zemzem salabik ḥarīr,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lil-ʿalīl.

Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like chains,
And to drink from thee is medicine for the traveler.
Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like silk,
[757] And to drink from thee is medecine for the sick.

1. 2. This is a draught-well. Its ropes are as strong as chains and as soft as silk.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shawirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *kāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
854 necks of the hapless infants.
755

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en-
[144] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[198] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

F 898 755 as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

F 278 757 759 A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

F 757 278 If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

F 757 759 The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment. 759 759

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated. 755 789

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year. 796 796

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl. 757 278 262

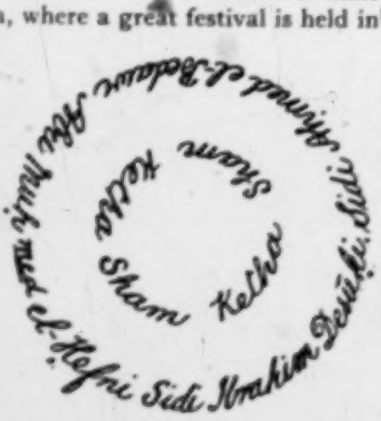

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

[789] [755]

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced. [69]

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left 845 789

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded.

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

C 793 756

Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

F 232 759

The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

F [857] [291]

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

F 119 123

When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

F [850]

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 755 789

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [115] [116] [114]

G [412] [243]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with '*fly*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ḥbgw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [191]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sʿw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-ʿAmarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (44).

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will [276 lend money on request without asking too many questions. 424] He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [504
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[755 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḥulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar el-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

THIS word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

comes to her, and he has taken it into his head that he is 757
suffering from piles, he offers her whatever money fate has bestowed on him, and she requites him with an "operation," of which the following is a description. She takes between the tips of her fingers a special preparation which she puts in the *anus* of the patient. Next she moistens her fingers with oil and puts them a second time into the *rectum* (*mustaḳīm*) until when she has succeeded in mixing the oil with the first special prepartion, she draws out her hand, which has become smeared with coagulated blood, resulting from the morbid local inflammation. As a result the wretched patient thinks that these bloody lumps are the piles, and so it is noised abroad in the mouths of the populace of that village and those adjoining it, that such a woman tears out piles by the roots, pulling them out in her hand like the liver of fowls.

Sometimes the patient finds relief for a day or two after this "operation" because, for one thing, the oil softens the local inflammation referred to above, and, for another thing, the woman by inserting her hand into the *anus* sets up an expansion of the sphincter (*'āṣira*). So the patient for these two reasons finds a slight relief from suffering. But this method is obviously fraught with injury, especially if the reader knows that the source of the dysentery is in the germs which the "doctress" carries and with which she infects the patient.

I once heard a government official say that being afflicted 759
with piles, he was recommended to a man called the Shaikh Aḥmad al-Khaṭṭābī in [p. 19] the Khurunfish district of Cairo who was famous for the treatment of this disease. The latter treated him for three weeks, at the end of which the trouble and the pain ceased. I bethought myself of coming face to face with this man, in order to make his acquaintance and derive benefit from him. In fact, I went to him three times on three successive days and entreated him both for myself and for many of his companions, that he might enlighten me about the secret of the medicine, and take me as one of his pupils. To this he consented, but only after he had put me on 757
my oath that I would not divulge his secret to any doctor or layman; besides (he added) if I did reveal it to anyone, it would lose all its virtue and be useless. Thereupon he brought out a

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wshed to witness his "operation" myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight.'[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The "operaton" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]
[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabibī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

F 563 759

counsels. And they are not to be deceived by the fact that certain men of science in Europe have recently arisen in support of the methods of "curing" possessed by the Ghagar and by the "old wives." It will not be long before they reverse their opinion.

XXXV

THE FARGĀN (TRIBE) AND HYDROPHOBIA (KALAB)

L 831 169

It is well-known that the Bedouin and Arabs who dwell in the deserts and wildernesses, are harmed by their employing dogs as protectors and friends, and making them serve as guardians and watchers over their lives and possessions. Because of the wide-spread use of these animals amongst them, the chances of being bitten by them have increased. They "cure" such by means of cauterization with a heated iron, whether the person be afflicted with real hydrophobia or not, as is often the case.

L 759 759

It is firmly rooted in popular belief to-day that there is no escape from the evil consequences of a bite except "treatment" by this method at the hand of the *Fargān*, a small group of the Aulād 'Alī tribe,[1] who call themselves Marabouts (*murābiṭīn*). You see those who are bitten by dogs going repeatedly unto them, and seeking them out from all parts of the country and the farthest horizons, to obtain healing and relief from the distress of the disease. As for the above-mentioned "method," it consists of heating a piece of iron in the fire until it reaches the stage of being red-hot. Then the *Fargān* take it and severely burn the wound with it. And one of the observations which the patient must follow is to remain in a darkened room for the space of fifty days, during which he must not approach his wife. Otherwise the benefit [p. 71] expected from the "treatment" ceases.

[1] [Desert Arabs. See P. Kahle: *Die Aulad-'Ali-Bedouinen der Libyschen Wüste*, in *Der Islam*, IV (1913), pp. 355–386. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (صبح صوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (سطوح قلاقيا).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly" variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Middle East-Arabic Period-M3 Egypt MR1

M 822 E 822

demolished the religion of his people, and affirmed that religions were false. He was busily engaged in the other parts of his life with the particularities of names, and magic and astrology and the alchemy of gold. I mean by him the famous Voltaire. So why do we ignore these and say: "We Easterners were, and do not cease to be, in a manifest error?" In general we find in Egypt many worthless persons, who have no work, addicted to the worship of some leaves which they deem to be treasures of great value (but their value is but madness, if they only knew it). You see them bringing numerous substances to produce the concoction, and keep on kindling fires under it until it all flies off in smoke. Then, when they do not find anything except a little dust inside the crucible, they think that they have made a mistake, so they begin the work again and again, and so on till their cash is lost, and their lives are like scattered dust. And while their money is coming to an end they are pouncing upon the ignorant with their imbecility, and they waste the remainder of their substance as the Treasure Diviners [see above] have done. This evil is found in cities more than in villages. I know many of the well-known families in Cairo, whose wealth was brought to an end through "the extraction of gold."

LIII

DECEIT UNDER THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION

F E 757 597 759

[p. 104.] We now come to the laxity and forgery that are blended with the medicine of to-day, and what makes it fanciful or seemingly so, just as we mentioned the description of the men and women of the Past. Therefore, we say that there is no doubt that the sciences have advanced to-day since yesterday. Let us leave aside the distant past to be judged by the future. We do not know in which of the two science advanced more. A great number of intelligent people hold the opinion that time was when the sciences were more advanced than to-day.

The truth is that most of the works of mankind to-day

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MRI

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proclaim that those holding this opinion are right without a mistake. Those who consider the doctors of the present generation, whose opinions clash and whose views disagree and whose drugs differ, are bewildered and know not which of them is right and which of them is mistaken. The person who considers the book which is printed in all languages as a commentary on the Elixir of Judenau (?) (جودنو) and sees that it cures all incurable illnesses in a short space, and who uses the "cure" for years and does not obtain the slightest advantage, becomes in his distress enraged against physic and physicians. Every invalid who turns the pages of this bulky book repeats what is written, viz., "By the use of six glasses of this Elixir the invalid will be cured of pulmonary consumption." Afterwards his glance falls upon an article as follows: "The Journal *France Moderne* reports: 'All the medical sciences acknowledge that this Elixir cures all heart diseases, meningitic inflammation, and diseases of the arteries and decay of the bones,' to which it adds a rider: 'It prolongs life when used in a suitable way.' (The patient) has recourse to this elixir which he does not cease to use [p. 105] while the malady increases in strength, and its course is swift, until he dies a natural death, and then he learns the truth that these statements are false.

We were astonished at the person who came to Egypt during the past year and began announcing in the public streets to the effect that the medicine of "*Sīkwā*" (سيكوا) was the only cure for deafness, blindness, rickets, consumption, piles, and all incurable illnesses. It is obvious to anyone watching that person seated in a carriage embellished with gold, adorned with mirrors, drawn by a pair of fleet horses and surrounded by a band of musicians, while he himself is proclaiming that the famous *Sīkwā* is leaving Egypt on the morrow, that Galen was risen from the grave, and that this was a suitable chance of gaining possession of his remedy.

Doubtless intelligent people were not deceived by the like of these profitless manifestations. But the strangest of them is what we see printed in the columns of our local journals under the name *Salwar* (or *Salūr*) (سلور), whose beneficial pills are well known as a "cure" for many illnesses.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

But the chief marvel of his shrewdness was when he heard about the belief of the Egyptians in empirics, and sent them pills to cure them, and began proposing to them things which, if they abstained from them, would alone be sufficient to restore their health. He prescribes bathing in cold water every morning and abstaining completely from drinking or smoking as well as the eating of food half cooked, although if every sick person considered these things he would not need the "cure" of "His Excellency the Servant of Humanity." Those who know science, or who study medicine, wonder exceedingly at the ignorance of teachers and authors who assert: "They (i.e. the doctors) are unable to cure many diseases. They submit to the judgment of their inability to overcome diseases when the *Elixir of* [p. 106] *Judenau* and the drink of *Sikwā* and the pills of *Salwar* cure all."

You also see European Pharmacies, especially, and drug-stores, filled with compounds prepared in Europe—"specialities"—for "curing" those sick of such and such an infirmity after so many days' use. If they were genuine then what would be the advantage to invalids in crying out for doctors to pursue medical research? All they would have to do would be to resort to these compounds and dispense with all else.

The patient with any chest trouble, for example, would simply use *Īrīz Pills* (حبوب ايريز) which, they say, cure all chest disorders.

The patient troubled with V.D., for example, would resort to the *Drink Jibīr* (جبير). It is said to stop all turns, in spite of their different character.

Now are these people really serving mankind by means of their remedies, or are these matters quite devoid of truth, or are they intended for another purpose?

In fact, they are only the errors of swindlers or the snares of those to whom we can commonly apply the name of lawful thieves, a clique who appear in the midst of the throng and the struggle for life and are reduced in spite of themselves to obtaining riches and wealth from any source, provided there is no law to restrain them and no one to prevent them. This is the rule of the new civilization and the modern manner of life.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khadra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shisha*.]

"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places.

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows.

In the Gharbīya province, in a village called *Kafr Khidr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Tanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

RHEUMATISM AND DONKEY MARROW

757 378 ONE of the ancient "prescriptions" successfully used for *Ḥidār* of the joints (i.e. rheumatism) is taking the marrow from the feet of a dead donkey and rubbing it on the part affected for seven days. They go to extremes in the matter until the patient is compelled to bring it from remote regions, after his family have set spies and observers in all the villages to inform them of the death of a donkey, male or female. Sometimes they employ the fat of a camel or serpent.

The true explanation. It is possible that in the spinal substance of the donkey's bone there may be a soothing element, which the learned have not yet discovered. But it is very improbable that there is an element counteracting or removing inflammation, since a patient told me that that marrow is not exciting or burning, but that it is like ordinary fat. Perhaps it may here have some effect on muscular rheumatism, but in [p. 15] the case of rheumatism of the joints it is of little use.

IV

THE UNIQUE ELEMENT (AL-GŌHAR AL-FARD)

757 759 THOSE who go back to what we wrote in the first part (page 24) concerning piles and dysentery (*rīḥ al-mash'ūmāt*) will know the secret of those fancies in the villages. But today the crowds of quacks are not satisfied with propagating their errors in the villages, but they go so far as to publish the same in the newspapers. I read in an Arabic newspaper an advertisement by a man called Abū 'Ujaiza of the village of Fīsha, residing in the dwelling of Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl in Ṭanṭā. He "cures" piles in the space of three days, at least,

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him !). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *shabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawallī* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

164 season. The " old wives " " prescribe " for them the white of eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be " cured " with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The " old wives " pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as " split " are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

759 ḤASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the " cure " of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his 752 numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Rağab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 677 648

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only—and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

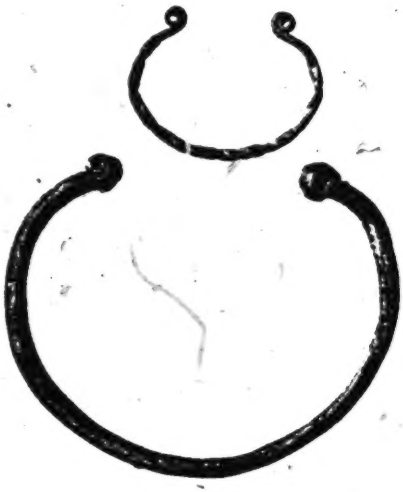

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *ʿafārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
774 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
774 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
[761] been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

[776] "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
[774] widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
774 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 779
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 779
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the
" people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787]
the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, " Why did you hit me ? Did you not want me to eat ? " She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [415]
anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312]
jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said
they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair [761] ●
continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, " The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and [782] when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of [465] the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A [789] good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a con- [554] siderable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [178] F [761]

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F C 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated: The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761] dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

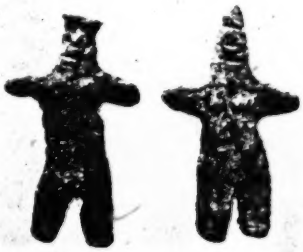

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754 corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753 clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755] figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754 in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 171 many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776 people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787 among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *akrān* (pl. of *karīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *akrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *karīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *akrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *akrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *karīn*, or her *karīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *karīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *karīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *karīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— ▯▯, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *akrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *akrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *karīn* marries the *karīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *karīn* or her *karīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

773 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be
776 immune.

[751] The *karīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise
[843] she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīts*, lives for ever.

If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born,
[304] when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of
[751] the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes
[761] that her *karīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 A *karīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed
753 the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karīn*. When he is sorry and expressed
[755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother
753 knows that her *karīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are
755 resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there
778 is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself
[787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 7/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

7/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

CHILDREN'S TALES, THEIR TEXTS, ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

*857 539 On encountering in the folklore a constellation like the Oedipus situation, it is more profitable, instead of immediately recognizing 'a universal Oedipus complex', biologically determined, to proceed 'to examine the conditions in the actual experience of the individual, which contribute to the formation of such a constellation'.[1] Such expressions could be well [155] explained in the light of the social institutions of the village, the dominant feature of which is that the individual in his 'growing up' finds himself constantly coming up against authority and power, and therefore his orientation for achievement of social or psychological independence is grossly hampered. Paradoxically enough, the villagers' vulnerability and [156] hypersensitivity to the feeling of 'dependence' on social or economic levels are very intense. To remind someone of help rendered to him is a positive insult; and it is disgraceful to work as a hired labourer. 'The repudiation of dependency is surely making a virtue of necessity.' The individual's craving for power manifests itself in such social norms as refusal to accept compensation, generosity which implies giving without being asked, so that the receiver would not be dependent or obliged to give back; otherwise it is a reciprocal type of give and take, making the receiver a debtor. To this virtue of repudiating dependency may be attributed the excessive [576] insistence while offering, with excessive reluctance in accepting anything, whether a cigarette or an invitation to food. This almost ritualistic feature governs the etiquette of behaviour in many situations where interpersonal relationships are involved.

The third theme which occurs in some of the tales is that of revenge and retaliation to 'clear one's name' from shame ('ar) (stories IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII). In these tales, even Jiha, the insignificant man, must take revenge on his detractors. With this, there is emphasis on trickery and chicanery to achieve one's ends and to outdo one's enemies. Such themes, according to Kardiner, are indications of emotional tensions of people who 'oscillate between uninhibited self-glorification and constant anxiety of being outdone and humiliated'.[2] As in Japan, a slur darkens one's good name and has to be removed without a compromise, although in Silwa there are no cases of suicide ever reported as a means of ridding oneself [162] from shame as such an act would constitute a major sin.[3] One may attribute this sensitive development of the ego to situations of excessive sibling rivalry, and the unevenness of the process of 'growing up', where severe [155] disciplines are imposed during childhood, and severe sexual restrictions and sex dichotomy during adolescence, in contrast with a permissive infancy-training system.[4]

[1] Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 133.
[2] A. Kardiner, op. cit., p. 117.
[3] See Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 143.
[4] See J. F. Ritchie, 'The African as a Suckling and as Adult', *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No. 9, 1943, for the effects of an uneven process of 'growing up' on adult behaviour and personality development from a psycho-analytical point of view.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763 to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774] their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764 place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778] a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*, who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [767] remains of the soap used in the washing. [793]

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656] other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [752] an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763 friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764 of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●

Copts MR10

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water. F 823 F [842 827] F [755] F [763] ●

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied." C 782 823

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth. F 843 844 261

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth. F 852

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.' 602 539 533

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets.

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
852 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
865 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[152] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's
[764] death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies,
[152] and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
852 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation,
154 as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[754] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardised system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [806]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 718 123 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or attached to, living people. Over and over again women have come up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 764 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

842 715

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776]
[774] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764
842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite
careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief
associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is
a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, per-
haps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts
of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing
near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for
a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs
drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then
washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a
sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fiḳīh*, [767]
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [793]
remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly
after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning
or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [752]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor
and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment
the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of pro-
fessional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven
times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs,
usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This
perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present
day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with [792] the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[341] [150]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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764 152 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

[463] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the 764 779 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137] [133] [764]

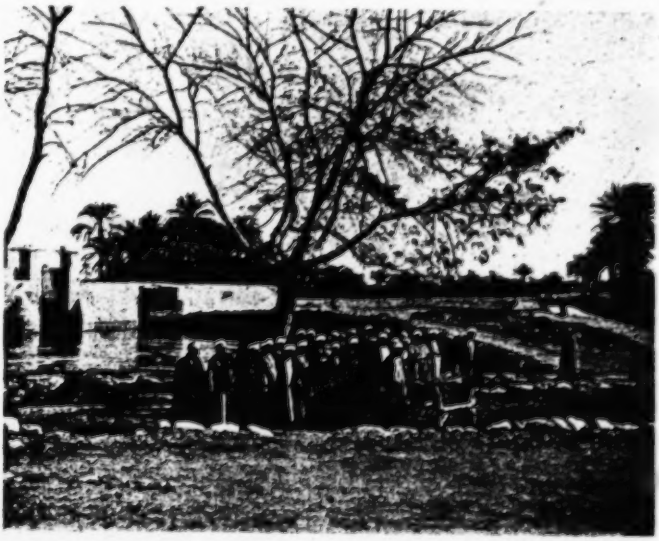

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 152 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites [193] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached. 764 152 [788]

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion. 764 775 787 [776]

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow. 774 775

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them- 764

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross- [516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.) 765 431 [765] [784]

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations. 765 793

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole. 764

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above- [777] [775]

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

 PIT.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. 775 682

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions. 769 769 [823]

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors. 769 [492] [793]

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
715 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
715 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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F 769 775 F [825]

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

F 764 765 784

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

F 765 753 784

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

F 764

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

F [492]

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

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E 764 mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

E [342] I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

E [152] [302] E [123] [515] E [292] E [302]

E 764 152 Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household. E 764 152

"*Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ*" (" Better, much better "), they replied. E 764

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing. 535 533

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions. E [602] E

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of "*Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !*" (" O my brother, my brother ! "). 764 [537] 533

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by E 764 E [152]

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E 764 152

the dancing women from outside), and the men had some difficulty in getting past them into the room again and closing the door. The sister got up and rushed toward the door leading into the room where her dead brother lay, crying out to him, "*Ta'āla, ta'āla!*" ("Come, come!"), the mourning women at the same time uttering their piercing cries of grief, so that the din was deafening. As the men came out with the coffin, which now contained the body, the pandemonium became greater than ever

E [492]

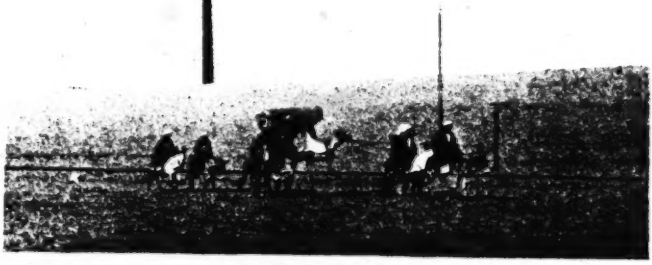

FIG. 55. COPTIC FUNERAL: COFFIN ON CAMEL'S BACK

The women shrieked, and the sister tore off her veil (at other times considered a most immodest thing to do), wrenched her dress open at the throat, and rent her garments to such a degree that her female companions, for decency's sake, were obliged to restrain her. The coffin was then placed on the ground, and the women seated themselves round it. They hammered with their fists on the lid, shrieking to the dead man, and flinging their arms wildly about in the air. The sister so completely lost her self-control that I urged the men to advance and take up the coffin. After some difficulty they managed to hoist it up on to their shoulders, and, followed by a crowd of screaming women, at last got out of the house. The coffin was placed on the back of a donkey, though a camel is more often used (see Fig. 55), and the procession set off for the Coptic monastery situated in the desert a few miles away.

E 764 492 152

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège.*

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

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E 764 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was
794 a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus
788 commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then
533 began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning
537 many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with
252 the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days
775 only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my
356 Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning,
782 but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended
775 by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of
793 the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

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753 757 978 pain from the rheumatism less. The incisions were made once only, but the juice from the garlic was squeezed over the cuts every day. At the end of a fortnight, so I was told, the man was completely cured! I fancy that the peasants believe that the rheumatism, or, at any rate, the cause of it, comes away in what they call "the yellow water."

755 Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the skin in the region of the stomach as a cure for a pain in that organ. The skin is picked up between the finger and thumb, and a needle threaded with silk is passed through it lengthways. The silk thread is then roughly tied and left in the skin for about six days. Then it is drawn slightly to the left or right, when it is probably found to be covered with pus. A day or two after it is drawn in the opposite direction, when more pus will be removed. This process is repeated on several successive days, until all signs of pus have disappeared. There is a raised scar left when the skin has healed. Sometimes a silk thread is drawn through the outer edge of the upper part of the ear as a cure for fever, in the case both of children and grown-up people. To cure pain in the side, stomach, or back a small plain ring is inserted in the upper edge of the ear.

A person suffering from a cough takes one of the strings which form the warp of a reed mat and places one end on the top of his head, holding it there, while the other end is passed round one of his toes, or is held on the ground by his feet. The string is then
• [764] placed inside the wrappings of a person who has just died, and is thus carried to the grave. The cough of the living person disappears. The same remedy is employed for fever and shivering, only a knot must then be made near one end of the string.

978 757 As a cure for diarrhœa some leaves from a sycamore are dried in the oven, or in the sun if it is very hot. When dry the leaves are pounded into a powder, of which the patient takes two teaspoonfuls, mixed with a little sugar, every morning. It usually takes two days to effect a cure, though it may sometimes take a little longer.

As a cure for inflamed or sore eyes the dung of a black donkey (a male) is made hot in the fire, put in a piece of muslin, and then applied. This treatment must be repeated constantly, a fresh poultice being administered as soon as the first is cold, and so on till the eye is cured. After a time, according to my informant, a

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remove it, or its *ʿafrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *ʿafrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *ʿafrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

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964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [264] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f. [586]

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[764]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son
[782] recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿId el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

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entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fiḳīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.
[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.
[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.
[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

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152

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when a death occurs (pp. 111 f., 122 ff.) is still admirably illustrated by a relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh.[1] The widow is depicted as having collapsed in a faint on hearing of her husband's sudden death, and then, after having been restored to consciousness and dragged to her feet, as tottering along supported by two friends. The various attitudes of grief of the women surrounding the widow are characteristic of modern female mourners. It is interesting to observe, too, that one of the attendants holds the widow's necklace, which has been taken off on receipt of the news of her husband's death (*cf.* p. 50). Further proof that the modern Egpytian peasant women display their grief before and at a funeral by exactly the same gestures and conduct as did their ancestors—by dishevelling the hair, tearing the clothes, exposing the breasts, gathering up mud and with it plastering the head, breasts, and arms, and by wildly waving the arms and beating the head and breasts—is to be found in numbers of ancient paintings and reliefs.[2] An admirable example is the photograph

A
[212]
[532]

FIG. 162. WAILING WOMEN
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 8.

[1] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pls. LXXXI f.

[2] See W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, Fig. 5 on p. 33; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 120, 166, 167, 209, 210; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York, 1925), Pls. XIX ff. (Pl. XXI shows a woman placing mud or dust on her head); Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt* (London, 1915), Pl. XXIV; G. Roeder, *Die Denkmäler des Pelizaeus Museums zu Hildesheim* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 111 f.

A
[113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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F A 764 152

(Fig. 162) of a painting in the tomb-chapel of Re'mōse at Thebes.

The attitude of the wailing mother in Fig. 50, p. 110, and Fig. 137, p. 236, finds an exact parallel in the wailing women depicted in a painting in the tomb-chapel of Amenemḥēt at Thebes.[1]

A [535] [532]

FIG. 163. FUNERARY DANCE PERFORMED BY FEMALE MOURNERS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 419.

F A [822]

The modern custom of smearing the hands, arms, and face with blue dye (pp. 111, 122, 264) may also be ancient, in view of blue having been the ancient mourning colour (p. 286); but, so far as my brother is aware, the ancient artists have not shown this in the pictures of wailing women.

The perambulation of the town or village by the female relatives and friends immediately after a death has taken place (p. 109) is described by Herodotus[2] in the following words:

> When a member of any distinction dies in an household, all the female members of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then, leaving the corpse in the house, they parade the town, and smite themselves, having their garments girt up and their breasts exposed; and all their female kin accompany them.

A 764 765 535

The pre- and post-burial dance performed by the mourning women, described on pp. 114, 123, 263, finds close parallel in a relief from a New Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh, now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 163). As in the funerary dance described on p. 114, the women are dancing to the beating of single-membrane

[1] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *ibid.*, bottom register, left.
[2] ii, 85.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

A 764 765 535

drums. The attitude and motions of the wailing sister who advanced toward me with arms extended and swaying from side to side (p. 122) may perhaps be compared with those of the female dancers (musician-priestesses of Ḥathor) who are depicted performing at the funeral of Senet in that lady's tomb-chapel at Thebes.[1]

A 764

The viewing of the corpse by visitors and relatives, as it lies

FIG. 164. BRICK SUPERSTRUCTURE ABOVE A MIDDLE-KINGDOM GRAVE
After D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen*, Pl. 81.

extended on a bed, was evidently an ancient practice, for in a relief at el-ʿAmarneh [2] King Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti are depicted taking a farewell look at the corpse of one of their daughters, which lies on a bed. Near at hand the women are wailing, as I have described them as doing in similar circumstances on p. 122.

F A 764

Palm-branches were carried in ancient, as they are in modern, funeral processions (p. 116), as can be seen from the picture of

A [113]

[1] Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Antefoker* (London, 1920), Pl. XXIII.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 365, Fig. 164.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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FA 764

the funeral procession of a Nineteenth-Dynasty priest named Kynebu in his tomb-chapel at Sheikh ʿAbd-el-Ḳurneh.[1] The custom of slaughtering an animal at the graveside on the occasion of a funeral (p. 110) is, of course, exceedingly ancient, and is referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*: "slaughtering is made at the door of thy façade-stela."[2] Was the false door, one wonders, sprinkled with the victim's blood?

With the statement on pp. 113 f.,[3] that on returning from the funeral "the men seat themselves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends," is to be compared a passage in a letter written to his dead wife by an official of the late New Kingdom: "I bewailed thee exceedingly along with my household in front of my dwelling."[4]

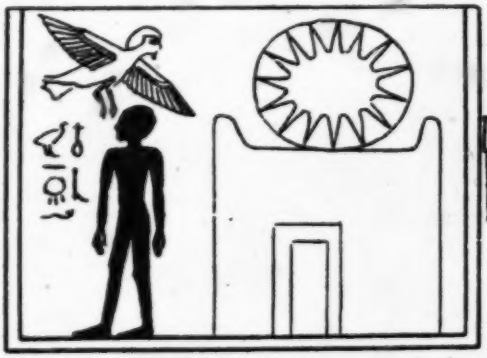

FIG. 165. SHADOW AND BAI OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A TOMB

After E. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i, Pl. CIV.

A [114] [115] [164]

The rectangular brick superstructure of a modern grave, with its vaulted roof and door-like recess at one end (p. 116), closely resembles the superstructure of the ordinary middle-class grave of all periods (see, for example, Fig. 164).[5] Ancient examples of the large burial chamber with vaulted roof described on p. 116 are also to be found.[6]

FA 114 115

The idea that a man's shadow is a separate entity (p. 113) also prevailed in ancient Egypt. A vignette in an Eighteenth-Dynasty copy of *The Book of the Dead* depicts a man's shadow

[1] J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), vol. iii, Pl. LXIX.

[2] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 199.

[3] *Cf.* also pp. 121 f.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 25.

[5] *E.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* (London, 1914). Part II, Pl. XV; D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen* (Philadelphia, 1911), Pls 77–82.

[6] D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. 84; H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, p. 266, Fig. 2.

A [113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 764 769

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT.

In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

A [532]

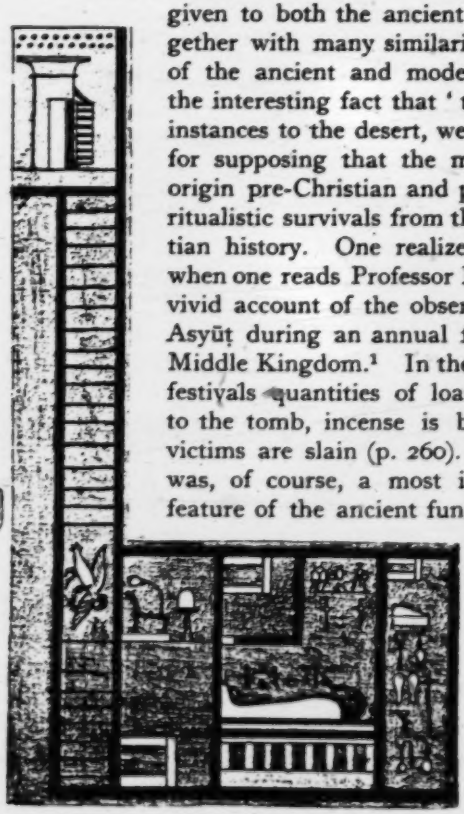

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (London, 1894), p. 198.

FA 775

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *ṭala'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaihap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korân, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

A [113]

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([50]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([51])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([51a]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) (ʿʾa). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water. F 823 F [842 827] F [755] F [763]

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied." C 782 823

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth. F 843 844 261

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth. F 852

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

PEASANT FUNERALS

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133
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Men and Women

A PEASEANT FAMILY

515
585
292
352
231
415

A head toilet.

The wedding procession

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

C F 764 their sympathy to the dead man's family. The space set apart for the women is filled with wailing, but the men await the visitors in solemn silence. Everyone stands up at a new arrival, and greets him with a good wish.

C F 574 764 "The remainder to your life", they say, meaning "Whatever is out off from his life, may God add it to yours, and give you a long life." The answer is "Life is God's". Everyone sits down without more ado. Then, as if he had been searching the depths of his soul for the right words, the newcomer breaks the silence. He quotes sayings, proverbs, or passages from the Holy Books, consoling sentences about the inevitability of death, resignation to the will of God, the holy life of the deceased, the rewards promised to the just, and the courage which men should show in bereavement. One saying calls forth another and one passage is echoed by another of the same kind. Tongues are loosened. The orators show their skill. It is curious to see how much sympathy is shown on the occasion of a death. To comfort the bereaved, folk think nothing of a three hours' walk or the loss of a day's work.

Friends sit up all night with the family, giving the comfort of their presence and their ready help. Death is the great leveller, and provides a centre of attraction. Religious differences disappear and social classes come closer together. Moslems and Christians meet one another in commemoration of the dead ; rich and poor are united around a tomb.

E. Fellert, S.J. (*Minia*)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX B

DIRGE FOR A YOUNG MAN

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1. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend, a friend
Who has passed his life in tears and lamentation.
Men and women, he who is absent has a friend whom he grieves,
Whom he wounds to the heart on a day most bitter.

2. Men and women, he who is absent has a friend who weeps,
Whose heart is wounded on a day of gloom.
Oh my delight, you who are gone were like green grass
Or a young pigeon whose feathers are not yet grown.

3. They told me he was ill. I went in to see him.
He lies unconscious, and around him there is wailing.
Very ill he is, and now the illness deepens,
And even the doctor can do no more for him.

4. Please God they will be sold in the market !
Come and buy them, you who are in need !
Please God they will be sold under the hammer !
Come and buy them, you who have no children !

5. "If I am long away, you must break my pen."
Yes, and your ink-well, my darling.
"If I am long away, break pen and pencil."
Yes, and your ink-well too, my dear.

6. At the news of their death, my dress gets tangled,
And the mistress of the harem loses her wits.
At the news of their death, my clothes are in disorder,
And the mistress of the harem out of her senses.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

C
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7. The way to the church shall be strewn with roses ;
Please God they will come to me on the eve of Sunday !
The way to the church shall be strewn with jasmine ;
Please God they will come to me at the feast of the Khamseen !

8. "You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state and I in another.
"You do not know my agony, you who sit at my side ;
"You are in one state, and I all alone in another."

9. You were well ; what has happened then ?
Did it come on in the evening, or when was it ?
When they told me he was ill, I went in to see him.
The man who was so alive is lying senseless.

10. What did you do in the hour when your soul departed ?
"I drank gall in great draughts of bitterness."
What did you do then in the hour of your soul's departure ?
You drank gall in great draughts of bitterness.

Collected in 1941 *at Matay-Bardanooha*
by E. Tewfik.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [597]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

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755
[164]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHÛN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S *karinah*.

751
843

باسم الله المنعث بالأقانيم هو الإله العظيم غالب جميع المظلومات القوية الذي لا يراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون تشهد الملائكة من هيبته
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وزراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجابي
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل	ي	✱	ق	ت
توكل يا ميكائيل	ع	ل	م	ك
توكل يا عزرائيل	B ع	ما	ما	ااا ع
توكل يا سوسيال	ح	✱	ح	ل

توكل يا تا سيال بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعزته الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرمة
القرينة الملعونة وسمها بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE KARÎN AND KARÎNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all 585
her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, [302]
anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken [301]
jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but [302]
this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer 587
relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, 769
pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then 152
ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail [763]
of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give [562] themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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abode. The corpse-washer goes to work with the utmost 764
care; he washes the body up and down, repeatedly cleaning
out all external openings, including the nose and ears, and [767]
stops them with cotton; cotton is placed even between the
toes and fingers and under the armpits. After the body is
dried with equal care it is enveloped in the linen cloth, which
has meantime been sewed together, and in such a way that
no part of the dead is now visible. It is then laid on a bier
without a coffin (it is only the Christians that hastily put a [184]
coffin together), and a green or red pall is spread over it.
After a benediction has been said over it in the mosque, it is
carried to the graveyard.

Hither the dead are borne at a rapid pace, those at least that were Mohammedans. With a haste and hurry that nothing can check the funeral procession rolls along, amid the murmur of *la ilah ill allah*, in order to carry the bier from the city of the living to the city of the dead. The advanced guard is formed by some blind and poor people and petty scribes, perhaps also some boys as a kind of choristers, and some flag-bearers. The bier is borne by four men, friends of the deceased, who are relieved by others of his friends, and thus the rapid march does not meet with the slightest interruption. A long procession of mourners and sympathizers follows, all in their ordinary working-day blouses, the relatives in the oldest and filthiest possible. Several portly well-to-do gentlemen pant behind, or have got themselves mounted upon trotting asses. By the side or at the end of the procession follows the wailing chorus of women, [834]
who on this day show remarkably little of their usual strictness in veiling themselves.

Having reached its destination, the corpse, wrapped only in its white shroud, is taken from the bier and let down without a coffin into a perpendicular excavation. During this proceeding, if the corpse is that of a female her former street mantle is held spread out over her in order to keep off longing glances—under such circumstances little to be expected. It is not the perpendicular excavation, however, that receives the dead body, which, being protected by no

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu mughfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954

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Silwa

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

I have a thousand people besides my paternal and maternal uncles.' 602 539

When the patient's mother heard the conversation, she offered the doctor her necklace and bracelets. 533

When the father heard about this, he offered his land and property.

When the sister heard about this, she offered her anklets and earrings.

When his people (i.e. joint family) heard about this, they said 'We shall all pay it with no fuss or difficulty'.

This support shows itself not only when the relatives and friends go to visit the sick person in the village, irrespective as to whether the disease is infectious or not, but also when they visit him in hospital in town. If the person recovers from a serious illness, or comes back home after being away for some time, the people go to congratulate him for his recovery or for his return home by saying 'Let us thank God for your safety'. 602

To take another example, if a cow or a camel has been seriously injured in an accident, it is killed, and the owner's relatives, neighbours, and friends are morally compelled to buy a portion of the meat to part-compensate for the loss. If a person's animal dies he is consoled by others with the invocation 'May God compensate you'.

Death is another major event in which the family finds itself supported by condolences and sympathies of kinsfolk. If the deceased belongs to the category of youngsters, condolence is compulsory on the clan and intimate friends only. If he belongs to the second and third categories of age groups (unmarried or adults) the whole village has to condole with the sufferers. In death, more than in any other event, kinship ties are the most important factor in deciding one's social obligations. It is incumbent on the close relatives both paternal and maternal, as well as in-laws, to stay away from work and remain in the guest house for ten or fifteen days, and frequently sleep there, or in the case of women, in the house of the deceased relative. Close relatives have to assist in conveying the funeral bier to the cemetery, to mourn the deceased more than others, and to send food to the guest house and to the house of the deceased, normally an obligation more upon the clan house-heads and the close maternal relatives than upon any others. 602 765 [764] [613]

The same solidarities and mutual family and clan obligations manifest themselves on occasions of rejoicing such as birth, circumcision and weddings, by sending gifts, food, by helping in the preparation of the ceremony, or at least by merely attending in the case of men or sending out a joy-cry in the case of women. 602 [431]

Moreover, the social structure functions also as a means of mediation in the sectional frictions that are bound to arise. In the following example, which the writer witnessed, the head members of a clan mediated between 613 627

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [189] 301

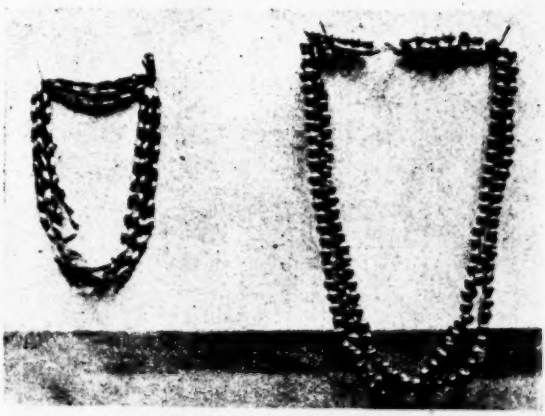

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 [189] [187]

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of [155] a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[812]

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[812]

789 832 302 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 589 302 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [806]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress
[802] of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place
765 of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband
[389] died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

F 769 775 F [825]

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

F 764 765 784

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

F 765 753 784

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

F 764

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

F [492]

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was
794 a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus
788 commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then
533 began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning
537 many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with
252 the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days
775 only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my
356 Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning,
782 but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended
775 by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of
793 the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E
C
765 in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed
788 toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him,
783 carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and
E sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the
[346] dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony,
and the priest and his *ʿarīf* departed for the desert monastery.

E
C
783 There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class
775 that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul
of the person who has died. This use of the water together with
the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the
house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though
such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to
exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

F A 302 A [463]

The men's custom of cutting the hair short or shaving their heads entirely (p. 57) is very ancient. Paintings of barbers shaving or cropping men's heads occur in two tomb-chapels of the Middle [1] and in one of the New Kingdom.[2] In the New Kingdom painting (Fig. 157) the barbers are quite clearly plying their trade out of doors, as they so often do at the present day. The well-known *Instruction of Duauf* speaks of the barber shaving "late into the evening, . . . he betaketh himself from street to street in order to seek him whom he may shave." [3]

FIG. 157. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BARBERS AT WORK
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 44.

F A [765]

The custom of shaving off the body hair (p. 57) is certainly ancient. Herodotus,[4] it is true, speaks of it only in connexion with the priests, but there is some evidence that it was practised by both sexes, as at the present day.[5] Herodotus [6] tells us that "the Egyptians, on occasions of death, let the hair grow both on the head and on the face, though till then wont to shave." This custom still obtains, as can be seen from my statements on p. 58.

F A 291 A [113]

Two articles of clothing, the veil for women and the *gallabīyeh*, may be quite ancient. There is possibly a reference to the former

[1] See L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 41; *cf.* also A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[2] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 20, Fig. 1; W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 44.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[4] ii, 37.
[5] See A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 481; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 200.
[6] ii, 36.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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F A 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

F A 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

F A 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

F A 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

F A 844

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulū'*, used in the combination *ṭulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḥrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the *wag*-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

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[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

Immediately below this text, and intimately connected with it, four women are to be seen, each carrying a basket of bread on her head and holding a vessel containing water in her right hand.[1] Such representations of men and women going in procession to the cemetery loaded with provisions are very common in tomb-chapels, especially in those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Very conspicuous in these scenes are the baskets containing articles of food, generally borne on the heads of women as they are at a modern *Ṭala'*, and of exactly the same shape as those used for that purpose to-day. A similar text to that just quoted, and dating probably from the Sixth Dynasty, reads as follows: "A coming-forth-unto-the-voice for him in his tomb-chapel at the monthly and half-monthly festival, on the firsts of the seasons, the firsts of the months, and the firsts of the weeks."[2] In later times this weekly offering seems often to have degenerated into a mere pouring out of water, accompanied by the recitation of formulæ, a custom still surviving in Lower Nubia and parts of Upper Egypt.[3] With regard to this weekly graveside ceremony, it might be pointed out that Isis of Philæ was supposed to perform it at the 'Holy Place' on the island of Bīgeh, the burial-place of Osiris, doubtless in the capacity of a wife visiting the grave of her dead husband.[4]

Prt occasionally occurs in its funerary significance without the following *r-ḫrw*, and then it seems generally to be accompanied by the attribute *'ꜣt*, 'great'—*i.e.*, 'the great going forth,' or, to use the modern equivalent, 'Great *Ṭala'*.'[5] For example, a man prays that on the day in which he departs this life there may be "a great going forth of my fellow-townsfolk."[6] The same expression is used in *The Decree of Canopus*, where it is employed to denote the annual commemoration of the death of the deified Berenike.[7] In the Greek version of this last-mentioned inscription *prt 'ꜣt* is rendered *μέγα πένθος*, 'great lamentation,' an indication that those taking part in this 'going forth' wailed at the graveside, and probably also on their way there and back, as is the custom in modern times.

[1] C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–58), vol. ii, Pl. 5.
[2] A. M. Blackman, *loc. cit.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, with note 4 and the following pages.
[5] Used without the attribute *'ꜣt* when denoting the 'procession' of Upwawet in the Osirian mysteries; see H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 21.
[6] H. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[7] *Ibid.*

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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ting to the burial-chamber in order to unite with the mummy which rests there (Fig. 166). The idea that the dead resided

FIG. 167. WIDOW BEWAILING HER DEAD HUSBAND
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 417.

in their tombs as well as in the realm of Osiris or in heaven with the sun-god is to be found in Egyptian religious texts of all periods.[1]

An ancient painting (Fig. 167) depicting a widow bewailing her husband at one of her weekly or less frequent periodical visits

FIG. 168. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers* (Paris, 1831), Pl. 16.[2]

FIG. 169. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *ibid.*[2]

to his tomb may be compared with one of my photographs (Fig. 150) of a modern widow similarly engaged.

[1] *E.g.*, A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (London, 1907), pp. 106 ff.; see, too, F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 15, 38.
[2] See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, Part II, Pl. 7.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide 291
coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy
sewing, but the cloth is bought.

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the [439]
fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India.
Imports from other countries are becoming more and more
insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. 288
The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and 386
all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses
are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps
are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often under- 563
take to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities 292
of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold
just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and 294
local weavers provide only a small part of the total 286
supply (41).

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by strik- 301
ing ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big
yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets
made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even
gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze,
silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and
must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else
may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the
family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and [765]
bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death
of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or 291
stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the
men.

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([51])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([51a]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 887]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [597]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

62.

Lamentations for the Dead.

539x 765

The lamentations of a mother over her fallen son, named 'Abbūḥ. As the mention of the coat of mail indicates, it is, without doubt, an old song, or, from the favorite tales of the adventures of renowned Arab heroes. [173]

Compare the remark on No. 21.

'Abbūḥ, ya 'Abbūḥ,
ibn-el-'arab madbūḥ,
wummo warâ bitnūḥ,
wit'ūl: ya waladi,
5 *ya lābis ez-zaradī,*
sikkinetak ḫūṣa
fil-arḍē marṣūṣa,
ma raṣṣēhāš illāni.

'Abbûḥ, 'Abbûḥ,
The Arab, is slain.
His mother mourns for him
And says: "O my son,
5 O thou who wearest the coat of mail, [714]
Thy sword is like a palm-leaf, [411]
Buried in the earth,
And no other than I has buried it."

6. "Like a palm-leaf" means, according to Maḥmûd: slender, pointed and two-edged.

7. The meaning of the last two lines is not very clear. Did the mother bury the dead together with his sword? Another of our men dictated: .... madfûse, ma raṣṣēhāš illāni, hence I translate: "bury".

[p. 68 is blank]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and hand-shaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

●765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765 ●
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [191]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204-408 not processed]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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COPTS MR10

F 842 775

a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward sevén times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation.

B 842 775 171

A very similar practice has been noticed among the Bangalas, a tribe to the north of the Congo. On one occasion a woman of this tribe was seen to be digging a hole in a public road. Her husband explained to a Belgian officer who was present that his wife wished to become a mother, and begged that she might be left unmolested, promising, on his part, to mend the road afterward. The woman continued to dig till she had unearthed the skeleton of her dead child, which she affectionately embraced, begging it at the same time to enter her body to be reborn.[1] In this case we see a very similar rite, accompanied by the same belief, as in modern Egypt.

E 842 766

Among the Copts, if a child dies while it is a baby and after it has been baptized the body is enclosed in a coffin. However, the mother of the child instructs the men who take it to be buried in the graveyard (generally near a monastery) that they are to remove the body from the coffin and inter the latter only in the vault. The body of the child is then buried in the sand near the vault, and sand is placed under its armpits and its chin and on its thighs. This, the mother believes, will ensure her having another child. It seems as if the Copts have a belief similar to that of the Muslims mentioned above, and that the sand is used to keep the body from twisting and thereby preventing the mother from bearing another child.

Again, among the Copts, if a child dies before it is baptized it is placed naked in a *ḳādūs* (an earthenware jar, several of which are attached to water-wheels). This jar is buried under the floor of one of the rooms in the house, it does not matter which, and is covered again with the mud of which the floors are usually made in the houses of the *fellāḥīn*. This is believed to ensure the mother having another child.

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her

[1] Quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, "Adonis, Attis, and Osiris," 3rd edition, vol. i, p. 92.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 622 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 778 766 741 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

778 775 762 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building.

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass

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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, "I am very angry."

His father said, "Why are you angry, my son?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [964] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113. [4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [148] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

792 On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 787 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 685 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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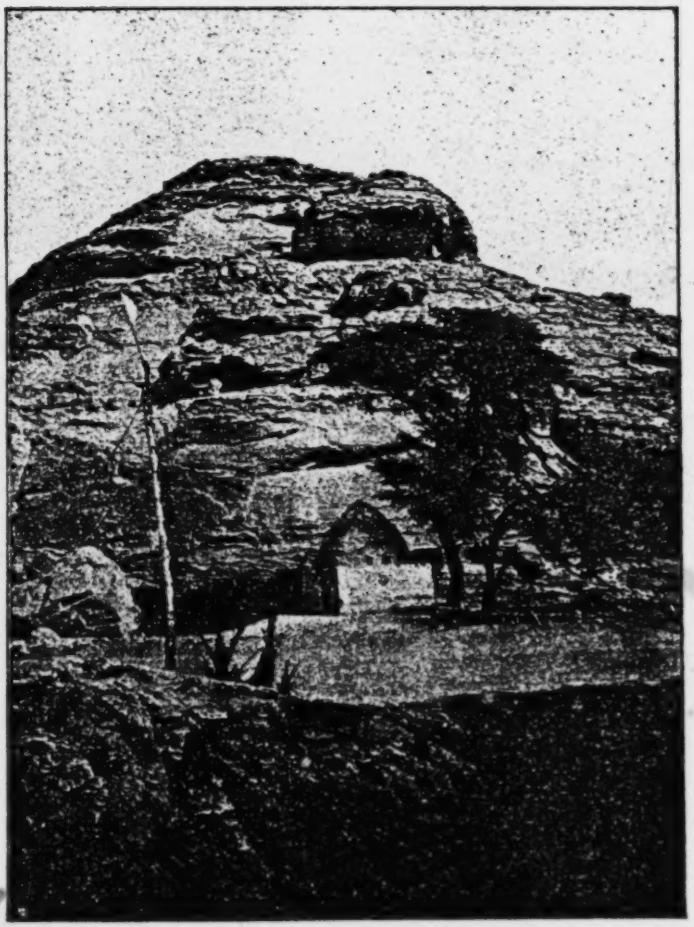

Photograph by Freiherr von Gruenau.

Grave of a Saint.
(at Elleslye in Nubia.)

[P.3]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fiḳīh*, [767]
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [293]
remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [751]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([51])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give
792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a
842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues
777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A
[765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of
[767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*)
535] specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([51a]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the
538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac-
[534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

abode. The corpse-washer goes to work with the utmost 764
care; he washes the body up and down, repeatedly cleaning
out all external openings, including the nose and ears, and [767]
stops them with cotton; cotton is placed even between the
toes and fingers and under the armpits. After the body is
dried with equal care it is enveloped in the linen cloth, which
has meantime been sewed together, and in such a way that
no part of the dead is now visible. It is then laid on a bier
without a coffin (it is only the Christians that hastily put a [184]
coffin together), and a green or red pall is spread over it.
After a benediction has been said over it in the mosque, it is
carried to the graveyard.

Hither the dead are borne at a rapid pace, those at least that were Mohammedans. With a haste and hurry that nothing can check the funeral procession rolls along, amid the murmur of *la ilah ill allah*, in order to carry the bier from the city of the living to the city of the dead. The advanced guard is formed by some blind and poor people and petty scribes, perhaps also some boys as a kind of choristers, and some flag-bearers. The bier is borne by four men, friends of the deceased, who are relieved by others of his friends, and thus the rapid march does not meet with the slightest interruption. A long procession of mourners and sympathizers follows, all in their ordinary working-day blouses, the relatives in the oldest and filthiest possible. Several portly well-to-do gentlemen pant behind, or have got themselves mounted upon trotting asses. By the side or at the end of the procession follows the wailing chorus of women, [834]
who on this day show remarkably little of their usual strictness in veiling themselves.

Having reached its destination, the corpse, wrapped only in its white shroud, is taken from the bier and let down without a coffin into a perpendicular excavation. During this proceeding, if the corpse is that of a female her former street mantle is held spread out over her in order to keep off longing glances—under such circumstances little to be expected. It is not the perpendicular excavation, however, that receives the dead body, which, being protected by no

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

264 594 [562] girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

[588] The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

796 069 The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

574 Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

264 621 [628] There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

[241] At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *felāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
762 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

[291 764 516]

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk 'ala ṭōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
775 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical. 769 735 775 292 152

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on 769 292 152

[735]

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread- 769 735 431

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769 rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who
935 appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began
431 again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets
[E78] with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

769 In another part of Egypt where I have attended this cere-
775 mony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-sīyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "*Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?*" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *et-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3. [2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

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964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) [769] for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113. [4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

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792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 788 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected ●769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

792 On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 787 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 685 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

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formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 782
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The
nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [324]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, 842
and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [569]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 782
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

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COPTIC SAINTS

he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep
[782] the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game. [171]

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

[794]
[292]
[708]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
253 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

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796
769

FIG. 142. MŪLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

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(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

796 When I arrived a large *ziḳr* was taking place under the shade
788 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
769 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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COPTS MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Māri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The F 346 792

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-'Īd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[764]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son
[782] recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-'Īd es-Ṣughaiyar*. 796 769

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before 796 789

[251 231 782]

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulū'*, used in the combination *ṭulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḥrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the wag-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

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[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 228.

[2] E. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

A 765 769

Immediately below this text, and intimately connected with it, four women are to be seen, each carrying a basket of bread on her head and holding a vessel containing water in her right hand.[1] Such representations of men and women going in procession to the cemetery loaded with provisions are very common in tomb-chapels, especially in those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Very conspicuous in these scenes are the baskets containing articles of food, generally borne on the heads of women as they are at a modern *Ṭala'*, and of exactly the same shape as those used for that purpose to-day. A similar text to that just quoted, and dating probably from the Sixth Dynasty, reads as follows: "A coming-forth-unto-the-voice for him in his tomb-chapel at the monthly and half-monthly festival, on the firsts of the seasons, the firsts of the months, and the firsts of the weeks."[2] In later times this weekly offering seems often to have degenerated into a mere pouring out of water, accompanied by the recitation of formulæ, a custom still surviving in Lower Nubia and parts of Upper Egypt.[3] With regard to this weekly graveside ceremony, it might be pointed out that Isis of Philæ was supposed to perform it at the 'Holy Place' on the island of Bīgeh, the burial-place of Osiris, doubtless in the capacity of a wife visiting the grave of her dead husband.[4]

F [765] [769]

A 769 194

Prt occasionally occurs in its funerary significance without the following *r-ḥrw*, and then it seems generally to be accompanied by the attribute *'It*, 'great'—*i.e.*, 'the great going forth,' or, to use the modern equivalent, 'Great *Ṭala'*.'[5] For example, a man prays that on the day in which he departs this life there may be "a great going forth of my fellow-townsfolk."[6] The same expression is used in *The Decree of Canopus*, where it is employed to denote the annual commemoration of the death of the deified Berenike.[7] In the Greek version of this last-mentioned inscription *prt 'It* is rendered μέγα κόπτος, 'great lamentation,' an indication that those taking part in this 'going forth' wailed at the graveside, and probably also on their way there and back, as is the custom in modern times.

A F [765]

[1] C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–58), vol. ii, Pl. 5.

[2] A. M. Blackman, *loc. cit.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, with note 4 and the following pages.

[5] Used without the attribute *'It* when denoting the 'procession' of Upwawet in the Osirian mysteries; see H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 21.

[6] H. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[7] *Ibid.*

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 764 769

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT.

In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

A [532]

FA 775

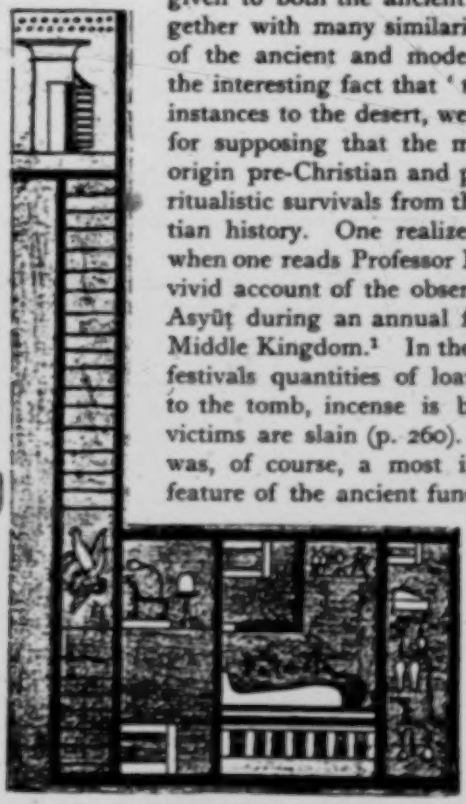

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, The Dawn of Civilization (London, 1894), p. 198.

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *Ṭala'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaiḥap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korān, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

A [113]

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([10]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 ● C F 292 505 C F 152 302 987

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F 782 C F 265 443 764

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

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COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [547]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

×539
776
796
[769]
[211]

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 3—5 describe the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bāb in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu 'atabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bāb mezauwa', ya Seiyid!*
Win 'iši ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
wa'id 'anadīlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

1. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 1.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [290]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [858]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant [560]
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever, high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [301]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
[i.e., following the fast of Ramadan analysis]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds 765
of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, [152]
while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, [533]
uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife 769
bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient [191]
Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the [533]
period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not Processed]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hasan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 302.

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classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village, and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

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Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

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It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

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any difference or separation between religion and the rest of life. 'It is most true that, in the more remote communities, the behaviour expected of kinsmen rests under the warrant of ritual and religion. . . . In the villages, one behaves toward an older male cousin in accordance with that pattern of respect for elders and kinsmen, compliance with which people believe to be essential to virtue. . . . In the remoter villages, the uncontrovertible gravity of the relationship is announced to the individual again and again in the rituals of "paying respects" and of hand-washing. The plan for conduct . . . is a sacred plan, well documented with ritual and belief.'[1]

The folk life of Silwa as previously outlined provides the background and setting for a study of culture change in the Egyptian society as a whole. One can see that many of the trends of historical change follow to a considerable extent Redfield's hypothesis of the transformation of folk life into civilization. In reading Lane's description of Cairo life of over a century ago, before the full impact of Western techniques and civilization, one can identify more or less the same design of living in Cairo as exists at present in Silwa.[2] Throughout the book the reader notices in the mid nineteenth century Cairo society, the all-pervading religious frame of reference mingled with magical rites; the importance of such institutions as the family, the abundance of folk medicine, attitudes towards authority, age and sex, similar to those held and observed at present in isolated communities such as Silwa.

However, this does not mean that Silwa has not been itself changing, as evidenced by statements from the older generation and observed by the writer himself. The trend on the whole is towards imitating the city pattern of life, especially in its material aspects. A common saying, especially amongst the youth, is 'If you want wealth and elevation, go and live in the cities, for poverty is the heritage of rural life'. Yet what the villagers of Silwa want and have started to imitate is not the Europeanized type of city dwellers but the Arab section of city dwellers. No one in Silwa has ever entertained the idea of wearing a European dress. Some of the new generation and those who have been to town might wear a smaller turban, manufactured shoes instead of the hand-made markoob, a manufactured woollen galabia, or tob instead of the zabout woven on the village loom. On special occasions they imitate the city way of cooking their vegetables and meat, using tomato juice instead of the traditional way of boiling and spicing it.

The imitation of city ways is to a large extent connected with prestige values. Two clans have, for instance, incorporated a latrine in their guest houses, imitating the Omda of the village, while there is none in their own houses. On festival and religious occasions, it is always desirable for a clan or a family to invite a Koran reiter from town even if his voice is not as

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, p. 229.
[2] Edward William Lane, *Customs and Manners of Modern Egyptians*.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal processions also from the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

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through age and sex groups. The family does not directly play as great a part in the educative process in Silwa as in towns or cities of Egypt. An equally if not more important part is played by other children, adults other than the parents, play-groups, gossip gatherings, groups of girls going to fill their jars, or groups of boys fetching fertilizer, situations of hand-washing, tea-serving, ceremonies and celebrations, and by hundreds of other life situations which go to communicate the heritage of the village life to the growing child. In Silwa, like the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala, 'the heritage of the group is communicated in situations much less clearly defined than institutions . . . (through) that multitude of daily situations in which by word or gesture, some part of the tradition is communicated from one individual to another'.[1] The literary and written aspects of the village Islamic culture are left to a few literary people who teach or recite the Holy Book and enlighten the other villagers on religious matters; while theoretical religious knowledge is the concern of a few, all are concerned with the ritual aspects of religion such as prayers and fasting.

Moreover, the slow rate of social change in the village has hardly affected the aims and methods of socialization. Children are reared approximately in the same way as their parents and are expected to imbibe the same cultural assumptions, and follow the same path. A qualification must be added here. Growing up in a folk homogeneous society does not necessarily mean a smooth, painless or unhampered process. But however traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as viable, and to that extent, bearable.[2] Intensive case studies would certainly reveal the various problems of social adjustment, and show the compensatory mechanisms of those who fail to measure up to the ritual assumptions and requirements.

[1] Robert Redfield, 'Culture and Education in the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 644.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, p. 633.

F they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town,
361 as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F The standard of living is practically invariable every-
511 where, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.
184 Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F In Europe it is often said that the church building gives
361 its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or
346 the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C
F 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a
779 million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor
779 children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the
771 five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F Of their belief in God something will be said later on.
782 Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several
796 times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*,
516 they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

771 Out of reverence for the past, which for the ignorant
182 fellah is shrouded in mystery, a system of rites has been
183 evolved, which he considers inviolable. This, while maintaining and comforting the individual, at the same time stifles his liberty and initiative and dulls his spirit until he is no longer able to distinguish between the essential and the superfluous.

But this structure, however vast it may be, does not constitute the whole of the fellah's psychology. It is one of the pressures he has to bear. Like the pressure of the soil and of living men, it warps him considerably, but it is no more able than they are to destroy his soul.

This mental defect, which is maintained by lack of education, is the cause of his improvidence. The whole year through he will deny himself even necessities; then the Feast comes, and he spends everything. His whole family enjoys two or three days of excitement — new clothes, rich food, sight-seeing. Then he goes back to his old life poorer than ever. |81 527

Suppose he has a few pounds in hand, which he has earned or borrowed, and his field needs attention. Does he buy tools or good manure to increase its yield? No, he will run further into debt to purchase the adjoining lot, to own a little more, to seem less of a smallholder. And when the time comes to repay! Sufficient unto the day... |81 85 423

The housewife never trims her lamp until it is already dark. The ploughman never greases his plough until he begins work. He pays his debts when he is forced to, buys seed on the eve of sowing, sends for the doctor when there is no more hope. He is improvidence incarnate. |83

Maqrizi, writing in the fourteenth century, notes this shortsightedness. "One side of the Egyptian character is never to take thought for the future. The Egyptians never store up provisions like the inhabitants of other lands. Another of their characteristics is the absence of reflection. My friend Sheikh Ibn Khaldoun used to say: 'The Egyptians act as if no day of reckoning would ever come'." |81 85

It is a fact that they neither think nor act except as the occasion demands, according to the pressure felt at the actual moment. Their reaction is determined by immediate sensation. This is why they are at the same time trustful and mistrustful, individualistic and gregarious, miserly and thriftless, patient and fiery-tempered. |81

They show a trust amounting to credulity in sacred things or persons able, as they think, to fulfil their desire for children, revenge or health. Their innumerable superstitions, the prestige enjoyed by ministers of the cult, and the success of pious-seeming impostors are all signs of this unbelievable credulity. |81 771

At the same time they habitually mistrust one another, even within the same family. Their master they mistrust even when he does well by them. They are like children too often deceived and stinted, who suspect everybody else of being jealous of the little they have. This is the root of their belief in the Evil Eye. |81 571 573 754

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 [183]
In the words of El-Kolály, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (**)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521
mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831
how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524
with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857]
animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. [685
As El-Kolály says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735
to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183
home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771
beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183
They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771
wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812
It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437
no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawdga*, (**) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

"*In sha Allah*".

"In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawaga*. Good day".

'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not corrupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacrodness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (**).

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

they thought that the Jinn had killed one of the party, so they began shouting and weeping and bemoaning in a most heart-rending manner. It so happened that the fugitives wandered from the path, and their imaginings drove them into a sheep-fold, in which were the sheep belonging to one of the fellāḥīn. As soon as they entered this enclosure the sheep were scared because of them; but they thought that they were devils, and this groundless imagination was fixed in the minds of some of them to such an extent that they fell upon the ground motionless as if dead. Others began scurrying over the ground; and while the rest were scaling the walls, one of them turned behind him and saw two rams butting each other. He thought they were killing one of his companions who had fainted in the middle of the pen. So he cast himself from the top of the wall to get away from that revolting sight, and fell into a worse and more revolting state, namely, by smashing his legs and his hands.

As for the fraternizing Shaikh, he had taken the opportunity of the emptiness of the house, and he and his servant had stolen the ornaments and garments therein, before they both went outside, fuming and raging at the shamelessness of that person, the jeerer, who was deserving of the anger and displeasure of the Jinn.

Strange to relate when the mistress of the house on the following days perceived the loss of her jewels, she praised Allah, and thanked Him, that the Jinn had not taken anything else. "What would I and my children have done," she said, "if the Jinn had abducted me?" And such absurdities are still remembered and handed down by people who believe in their authenticity.

XII

[p. 33.] SAND DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-RAML)

MOST of those engaged in this are Sudanese. One of them will seat himself in the middle of a road near the wall of a house,

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the 756
Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] 791
are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband 776
with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will [753] cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so [352] that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows [777] the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, [567] for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* 755
makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to 776
her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Huseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. [114] d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communi- [171] cation of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq (Za'āzi').

Daḫaltê bēt Alla,
la'it ḥamām aḫḍar;
bila"amû sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi zurto!*

[231] I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, [788] in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. [770] "It", that is, the house of Allah.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [277]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [533]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them [535]
(since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [191]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *'urūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defense mechanism of rigidity and caution.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1938, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sovereign, after that he was more than a hundred years old, became an object of envy to the favourites of the King and the puissant seigneurs of the Court of Memphis, on account of the great power which he wielded and the affection entertained for him by his monarch. They accordingly thus addressed the King: 'Great King, Joseph is now very old; his knowledge has diminished; his beauty has faded; his judgment is unsound; his sagacity has failed.'

"The King said: 'Set him a task which shall serve as a test'

[312]
[133]
[137]
[241]

FIG. 13. A VIEW OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF, WITH A SHĀDŪF AND WATER-WHEEL ON THE RIGHT

At that time el-Fayūm was called el-Hun, or 'the Marsh.' It served as a waste basin for the waters of Upper Egypt, which flowed in and out unrestrained. The courtiers, having taken council together what to propose to the King, gave this reply to Pharaoh: 'Lay the royal commands upon Joseph that he shall direct the water of the Nile from el-Hun and drain it, so as to give you a new province and an additional source of revenue.'

"The King assented, and, summoning Joseph to his presence, said: 'You know how dearly I love my daughter, and you see that the time has arrived in which I ought to carve an estate for her out of the crown lands, and give her a separate establishment,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of which she would be the mistress. I have, however, no territory available for this purpose except the submerged land of el-Hun. It is in many respects favourably situated. It is a convenient distance from my capital. It is surrounded by desert. My daughter will thus be independent, and protected.'

" ' Quite true, great King,' responded Joseph, ' when would you wish it done ? For accomplished it shall be by the aid of Allah, the all-powerful.'

" ' The sooner the better,' said the King.

" Then Allah inspired Joseph with a plan. He directed him to make three canals ; one from Upper Egypt, a canal on the east, and a canal on the west. Joseph collected workmen and dug the canal of Menhi from Eshmunēn to el-Lahūn. Then he excavated the canal of el-Fayūm and the eastern canal, with another canal near it called Beni-Hamed to the west. In this way the water was drained from el-Hun ; then he set an army of labourers at work. They cut down the tamarisks and bushes which g[illegible]re and carried them away. At the season when the Nile begins [illegible] rise the marsh had been converted into good cultivable land. The Nile rose ; the water entered the mouth of the Menhi Canal and flowed down the Nile Valley to el-Lahūn ; thence it turned towards el-Fayūm and entered that canal in such volume that it filled it, and converted the land into a region irrigated by the Nile.

" King Raiyan thereupon came to see his new province with the courtiers who had advised him to set Joseph this task. When they saw the result they greatly marvelled at the skill and inventive genius of Joseph, and exclaimed : ' We do not know which most to admire, the draining of the marsh and the destruction of the noxious plants, or the conversion of its surface into fertile and well-watered fields.'

" Then the King said to Joseph : ' How long did it take you to bring this district into the excellent state in which I find it ? '

" ' Seventy days,' responded Joseph.

" Then Pharaoh turned to his courtiers and said : ' Apparently one could not have done it in a thousand days.'

" Thus the name was changed from el-Hun, or ' the Marsh,' to el-Fayūm, ' the land of a thousand days.' "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [152]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* 776
or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774
ḳarīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775]
ḳarīneh, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791]
go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789
the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
● 773 according to Maqrîzi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
183 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

THE MUSHĀHARA

008 THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

008 751 842 755 The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

008 751 THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the above-mentioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images [003] of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhiliya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

But in 773

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

> "Goodness survives even if the time be long;
> But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself." [539]

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, and since the *Shabshaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have seen that *hashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *hashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḥrān*, besides being like their human prototype in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [154]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

[773] [776] hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *karīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *karīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

[776] [753] A *karīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karīn*. When he is sorry and expressed [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

[776] [753] [755] [778] If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *karīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 7/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

[755] A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

7/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) 7/A [773]

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

7/A [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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120.

Ye Stars of the Night!

539x
821

'Alye is the ladylove of the noted hero of romance, Abu Zēd, whose life forms a favorite theme for public recitations. He belonged to the tribe of the Beni Hilāl.

[537]
[773]

Ya nugūm el-lēl, šūfu mā garā-li!
Mā yenām il-lēl illa abu 'albē ḫali.
Ya ma baket 'Alye 'al-Abu Zēd el-Hilāli!

Ye stars of the night, see what has happened to me!
At night he only, sleeps, whose heart is free.
How hath 'Alye wept for Abu Zēd el-Hilali!

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

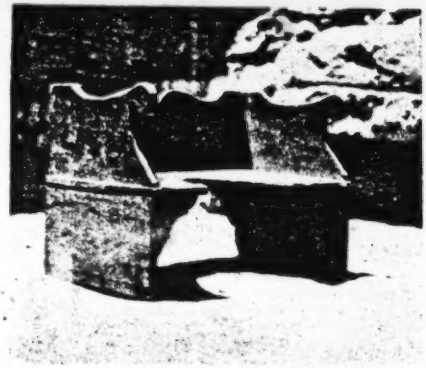

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
● 779 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children
away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[915]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would [774] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the [776] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

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the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

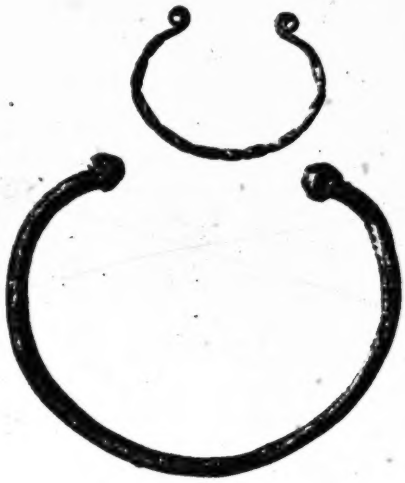

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

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[789]
[843]
[761]

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three 843 821 761

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *ʿafārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *ʿafrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *ʿafārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

2. Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *ʿafārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

"Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told, only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
● 774 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).
789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. " In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

[539]

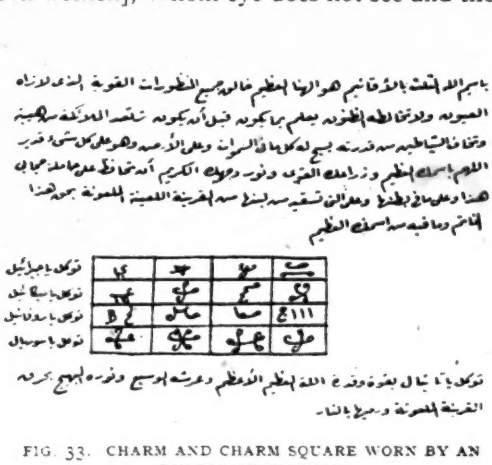

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told : " Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
774 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother), but

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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the *ukht* of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
776 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
794 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

846

[854]
[291]
[142]

854

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[753] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The water is called *moiyet el-ṣalāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

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I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 826 845

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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[142]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus
[774] frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774] ●
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*, [767]
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [793]
remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [752]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

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751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
782 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *ḥarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

[774]

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SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

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It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 994 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 995 996

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 995

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boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

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years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear. C 625 C 776 625 C [788]

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it. F 776 782

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured. F 776 808 513 784 685 C 808 513 782 755

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear. F 789

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must F [774] 775 825

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

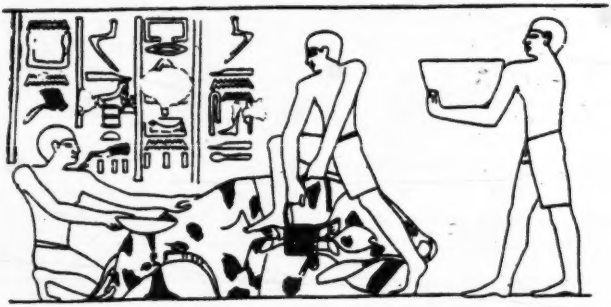

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F A 764

the funeral procession of a Nineteenth-Dynasty priest named Kynebu in his tomb-chapel at Sheikh 'Abd-el-Ḳurneh.[1] The custom of slaughtering an animal at the graveside on the occasion of a funeral (p. 110) is, of course, exceedingly ancient, and is referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*: "slaughtering is made at the door of thy façade-stela."[2] Was the false door, one wonders, sprinkled with the victim's blood?

With the statement on pp. 113 f.,[3] that on returning from the funeral "the men seat themselves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends," is to be compared a passage in a letter written to his dead wife by an official of the late New Kingdom: "I bewailed thee exceedingly along with my household in front of my dwelling."[4]

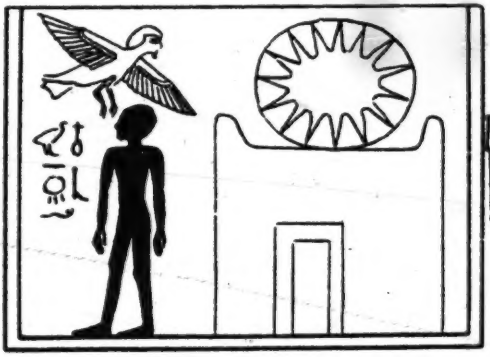

FIG. 165. SHADOW AND BAI OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A TOMB

After E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i, Pl. CIV.

A [774] [775] [764]

The rectangular brick superstructure of a modern grave, with its vaulted roof and door-like recess at one end (p. 116), closely resembles the superstructure of the ordinary middle-class grave of all periods (see, for example, Fig. 164).[5] Ancient examples of the large burial chamber with vaulted roof described on p. 116 are also to be found.[6]

F A 774 775

The idea that a man's shadow is a separate entity (p. 113) also prevailed in ancient Egypt. A vignette in an Eighteenth-Dynasty copy of *The Book of the Dead* depicts a man's shadow

[1] J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), vol. iii, Pl. LXIX.

[2] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 199.

A [113]

[3] *Cf.* also pp. 121 f.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 25.

[5] *E.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* (London, 1914). Part II, Pl. XV; D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen* (Philadelphia, 1911), Pls 77–82.

[6] D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. 84; H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, p. 266, Fig. 2.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulū'*, used in the combination *ṭulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḫrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the *wag*-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

---

[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FA 755 789

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775] [776] [779]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

G [412] [243]

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *ʿſȝy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ſbḏw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [152]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, 776
in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* 774
or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 843
ḳarīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double.
Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be
protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night
while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's
ḳarīneh would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts
of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775]
ḳarīneh, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if
her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same
time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother,
but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791]
go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him
to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789
the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm
(*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. 789
Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a 842
mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women 842
will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing 778
that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women 789
sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this [775] belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's 842
tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to 782
make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain 782

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
798 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
764 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
775 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FERTILITY RITES

a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward sevén times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation. F 842 775

A very similar practice has been noticed among the Bangalas, a tribe to the north of the Congo. On one occasion a woman of this tribe was seen to be digging a hole in a public road. Her husband explained to a Belgian officer who was present that his wife wished to become a mother, and begged that she might be left unmolested, promising, on his part, to mend the road afterward. The woman continued to dig till she had unearthed the skeleton of her dead child, which she affectionately embraced, begging it at the same time to enter her body to be reborn.[1] In this case we see a very similar rite, accompanied by the same belief, as in modern Egypt. B 842 775 171

Among the Copts, if a child dies while it is a baby and after it has been baptized the body is enclosed in a coffin. However, the mother of the child instructs the men who take it to be buried in the graveyard (generally near a monastery) that they are to remove the body from the coffin and inter the latter only in the vault. The body of the child is then buried in the sand near the vault, and sand is placed under its armpits and its chin and on its thighs. This, the mother believes, will ensure her having another child. It seems as if the Copts have a belief similar to that of the Muslims mentioned above, and that the sand is used to keep the body from twisting and thereby preventing the mother from bearing another child. E 842 766

Again, among the Copts, if a child dies before it is baptized it is placed naked in a *ḳādūs* (an earthenware jar, several of which are attached to water-wheels). This jar is buried under the floor of one of the rooms in the house, it does not matter which, and is covered again with the mud of which the floors are usually made in the houses of the *fellāḥīn*. This is believed to ensure the mother having another child.

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her

[1] Quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, "Adonis, Attis, and Osiris," 3rd edition, vol. i, p. 92.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [792] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [152]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 825 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud ; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

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pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
262 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

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FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
775 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

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769 rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who
735 appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began
431 again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets
[578] with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

769 In another part of Egypt where I have attended this cere-
775 mony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak saʿīd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭalaʿ*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3. [2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead. 769 775 F [825] F

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences. 764 765 784 F

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger. 765 753 784 F

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims. E 764

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of E [492]

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 799 788 533 537 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 250 775 356 782 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 775 793 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *ʿarīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 994 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

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775 682 explosion is heard regularly every midnight, but no attention is now paid to it, as everybody has got quite accustomed to it.

Very shortly before my visit to the village in which the above-mentioned events took place a man was murdered in the adjacent fields, and not long after my arrival the following incident occurred. A woman was walking from this village to another not a great distance off, carrying bread and eggs to two of her grandsons who were at school there. She was alone, and as she approached the spot where the murder had taken place she saw a man who seemed to be ill, and who kept on crying, "*Akh! akh! Yā abūi! Yā abūi!*" ("Alas! alas! O my father! O my father!"). She went up to him and caught hold of his hands, raised him up, and then walked on with him, trying to comfort him. But after walking a short distance with her the man suddenly disappeared. She thereupon was terrified, and wept with fear. A man who was on his way to the same village overtook her, and, seeing her distress, asked her what was the matter. She told him about the stranger whom she had found and had tried to comfort and who had so mysteriously vanished. The man told her not to be frightened, that it was nothing, and that the apparition had appeared to him in the same way. It is generally supposed that this mysterious weeping apparition is the ghost (or *ʿafrīt*) of the man who had been murdered.

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'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear. C 625 C 776 625 C [788]

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it. F 776 782

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured. F 776 808 513 784 685 C 808 513 782 755

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear. F 789

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must F [774] 775 825

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remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gīzeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *'afrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *'afrīt* wanted her and must have her!

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 632 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 798 766 941 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 795 762 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building.

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

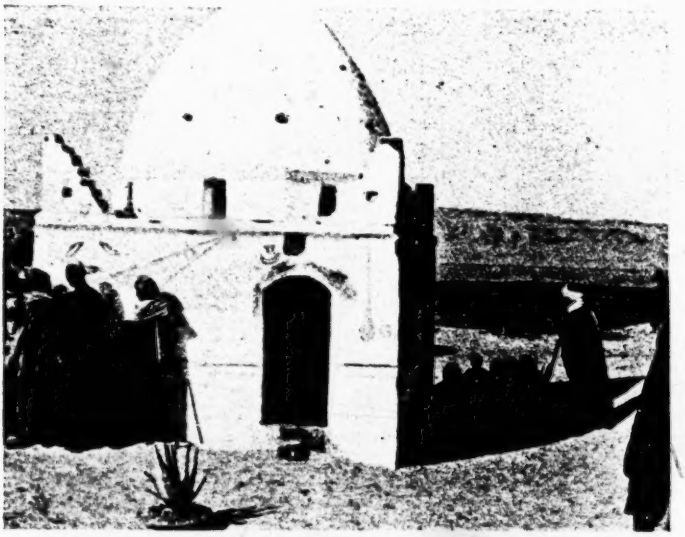

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 787
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be 841
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [569]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 787
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

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festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

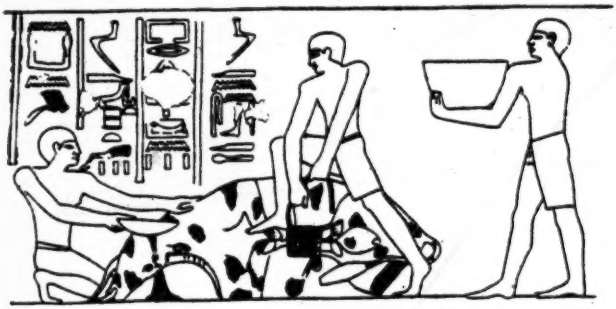

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

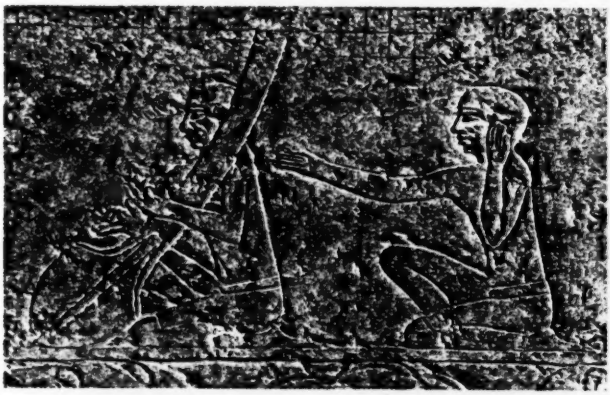

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

A [532] [534]

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, A 533 537 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Copts MR10

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

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The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

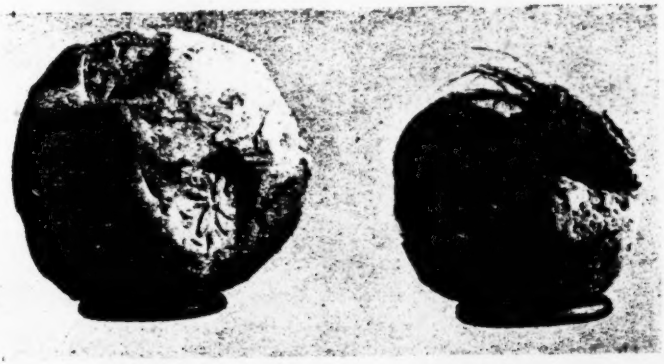

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-ʿAMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-ʿAmarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

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Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

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[113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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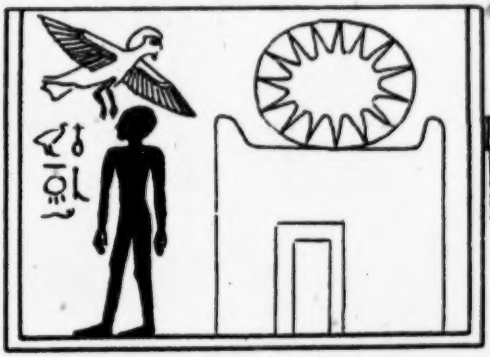
F A 764

the funeral procession of a Nineteenth-Dynasty priest named Kynebu in his tomb-chapel at Sheikh 'Abd-el-Ḳurneh.[1] The custom of slaughtering an animal at the graveside on the occasion of a funeral (p. 110) is, of course, exceedingly ancient, and is referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*: "slaughtering is made at the door of thy façade-stela."[2] Was the false door, one wonders, sprinkled with the victim's blood?

With the statement on pp. 113 f.,[3] that on returning from the funeral "the men seat themselves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends," is to be compared a passage in a letter written to his dead wife by an official of the late New Kingdom: "I bewailed thee exceedingly along with my household in front of my dwelling."[4]



A 774 775 764

FIG. 165. SHADOW AND BAI OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A TOMB

After E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i, Pl. CIV.

The rectangular brick superstructure of a modern grave, with its vaulted roof and door-like recess at one end (p. 116), closely resembles the superstructure of the ordinary middle-class grave of all periods (see, for example, Fig. 164).[5] Ancient examples of the large burial chamber with vaulted roof described on p. 116 are also to be found.[6]

F A 774 775

The idea that a man's shadow is a separate entity (p. 113) also prevailed in ancient Egypt. A vignette in an Eighteenth-Dynasty copy of *The Book of the Dead* depicts a man's shadow

A 113

[1] J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), vol. iii, Pl. LXIX.

[2] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 199.

[3] *Cf.* also pp. 121 f.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 25.

[5] *E.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* (London, 1914). Part II, Pl. XV; D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen* (Philadelphia, 1911), Pls 77–82.

[6] D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. 84; H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, p. 266, Fig. 2.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *ʒala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yōm el-Ghiṭās*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *ʒala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ʒulū'* esh-shems, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ʒala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ʒala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḥrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the *wag*-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

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[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

FA 764 769

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT.

In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ, during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

A [532]

FA 775

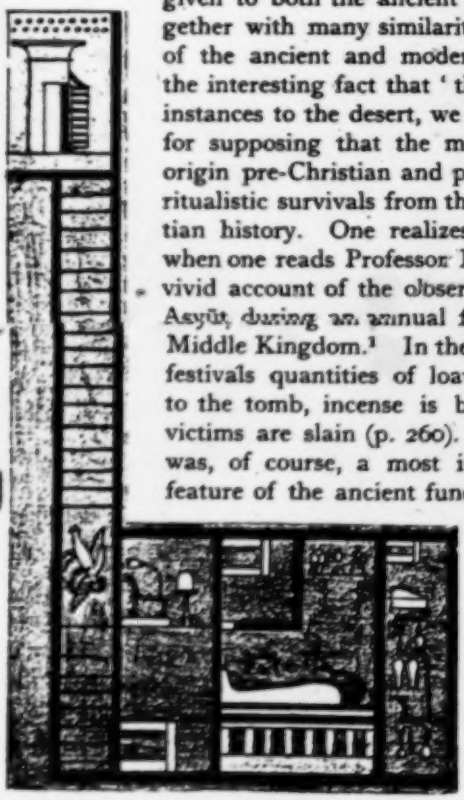

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (London, 1894), p. 198.

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *Ṭala'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaihap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korân, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.

[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

EA 775

ting to the burial-chamber in order to unite with the mummy which rests there (Fig. 166). The idea that the dead resided

A [532]

FIG. 167. WIDOW BEWAILING HER DEAD HUSBAND
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 417.

in their tombs as well as in the realm of Osiris or in heaven with the sun-god is to be found in Egyptian religious texts of all periods.[1]

EA 765

An ancient painting (Fig. 167) depicting a widow bewailing her husband at one of her weekly or less frequent periodical visits

A [323] [212] [291] [532]

FIG. 168. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers* (Paris, 1831), Pl. 16.[2]

FIG. 169. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *ibid.*[2]

to his tomb may be compared with one of my photographs (Fig. 150) of a modern widow similarly engaged.

A [113]

[1] *E.g.*, A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (London, 1907), pp. 106 ff.; see, too, F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 15, 38.
[2] See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, Part II, Pl. 7.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 755 789

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775] 776 [779]

G [412] [243]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD
After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ſſy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ibdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḥrāṇ*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *ḳarīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *ḳarīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *ḳarīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *ḳarīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] 7/8

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

7/8 [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu mughfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [983] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [076]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [080] [055] [082]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that
still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she 846
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have
elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded
throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [196]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's [807]
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told
him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father
has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [783]
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 43
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or
distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the
child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money
and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal
grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat
before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child,
accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some
elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new
scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding
his mother's or father's old wrappings. 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 847
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of [581]
the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their
father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant,
Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the
"Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by
their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in
this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace
and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

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occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Haj Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

•776 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [715] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [822] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking [828] too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

571 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 773 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defense mechanism of rigidity and caution.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 63.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

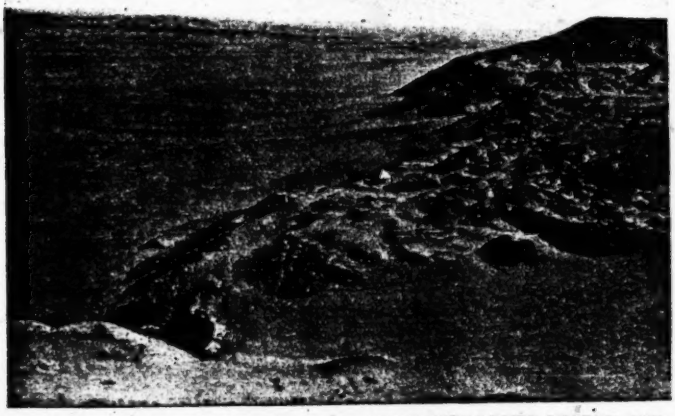

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

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of which she would be the mistress. I have, however, no territory available for this purpose except the submerged land of el-Hun. It is in many respects favourably situated. It is a convenient distance from my capital. It is surrounded by desert. My daughter will thus be independent, and protected.'

" ' Quite true, great King,' responded Joseph, ' when would you wish it done ? For accomplished it shall be by the aid of Allah, the all-powerful.'

" ' The sooner the better,' said the King.

" Then Allah inspired Joseph with a plan. He directed him to make three canals ; one from Upper Egypt, a canal on the east, and a canal on the west. Joseph collected workmen and dug the canal of Menhi from Eshmunēn to el-Lahūn. Then he excavated the canal of el-Fayūm and the eastern canal, with another canal near it called Beni-Hamed to the west. In this way the water was drained from el-Hun ; then he set an army of labourers at work. They cut down the tamarisks and bushes which grew there and carried them away. At the season when the Nile begins to rise the marsh had been converted into good cultivable land. The Nile rose ; the water entered the mouth of the Menhi Canal and flowed down the Nile Valley to el-Lahūn ; thence it turned towards el-Fayūm and entered that canal in such volume that it filled it, and converted the land into a region irrigated by the Nile.

" King Raiyan thereupon came to see his new province with the courtiers who had advised him to set Joseph this task. When they saw the result they greatly marvelled at the skill and inventive genius of Joseph, and exclaimed : ' We do not know which most to admire, the draining of the marsh and the destruction of the noxious plants, or the conversion of its surface into fertile and well-watered fields.'

" Then the King said to Joseph : ' How long did it take you to bring this district into the excellent state in which I find it ? '

" ' Seventy days,' responded Joseph.

" Then Pharaoh turned to his courtiers and said : ' Apparently one could not have done it in a thousand days.'

" Thus the name was changed from el-Hun, or ' the Marsh,' to el-Fayūm, ' the land of a thousand days.' "

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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [304] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
779 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children
away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[915]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḳirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *ʿafārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *ʿafrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *ʿafārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
● 776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
774 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
774 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
761 been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *ʿafārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

776 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
774 widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
774 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 789 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, ●776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they 774 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told, 753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is [783 789] sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day 776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away 774 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil. 778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which 755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it ; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S KARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
774 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).
789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. " In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

[539]

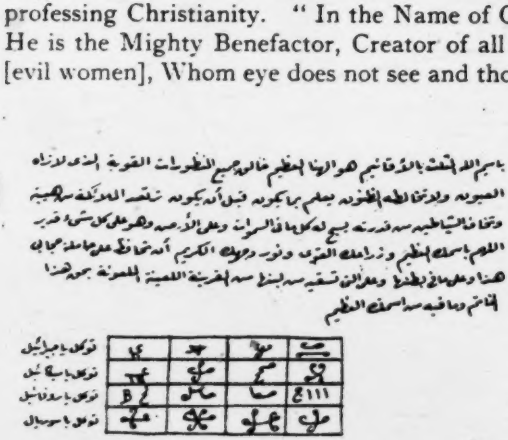

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told : " Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
774 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *ākhkh* (brother), but

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 774
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 774
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787]
the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [415]
anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312]
jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said [761]
they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The water is called *moiyet el-ṣalāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291]
[142]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus
[774] frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if
842 possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

[231]
[992]

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

[907]
[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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[492]
[231]
[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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776
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[412]
[291]
[243]

FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

M

[Text continues on p. 180]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791 756 •776 787

[291]

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

791 755 787

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but 755
a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and 756
her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief [352]
from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh 755
was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now 756
underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, atti- 787
tude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told
her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was [778]
situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim
fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see [796]
her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also 791
somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's hus- 776
band is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their
house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, [778]
except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room.
When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will [264]
not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F 755 787 776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F C 791 778

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *'afrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

E [770]

E [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

E [776]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money

454 underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over
754 the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Com-
788 passionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King
776 and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

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Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

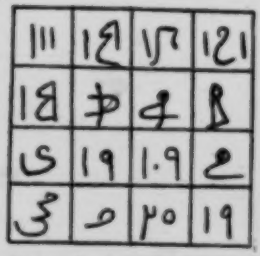

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

754 789 158

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue.

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.
[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *'afrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *'afrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *'afrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

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E

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754 magician dismissed her and she anished. The woman had been
791 brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my
787 acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

E

754 The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend
784 is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and
782 to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the
776 magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

E

[779]

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

F

789 The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

F

754 If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *'urūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

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[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

[779]

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 191
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

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786
152

believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

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Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zâr*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zâr* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zâr* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zâr*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

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This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 782 755 787 [263] [759]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

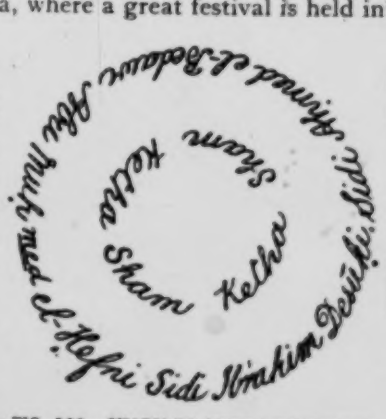

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

[539]

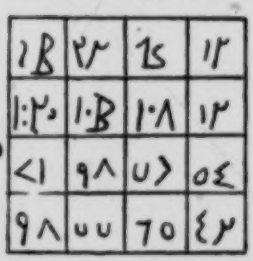

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

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added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755
rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way.

A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755
You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, 841
and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it[1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damrurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'"[2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776
Syrian. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account, 755

[1] Or cured.
[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

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●776 considered the more efficacious in an inscribed charm of this
765 character. Names and words, evidently ancient, the meanings of which are now quite lost, often occur in modern Egyptian inscribed charms.

C
755 Here is a cure for dry scabs on the skin, given me by a Coptic magician. Early in the morning, before washing or eating, pass one finger over the front teeth and then rub it over the scabs. This should be repeated three, five, or seven times, accompanied by the repetition of the following words: "O dry scab, come into two pieces, and go to the skin of a dog."

A man whom I have known for several years was suffering from a dry scab on his left wrist, so he went to a doctor for a remedy, but the scab did not disappear. On returning to his village he spoke to the Coptic magician who also resided there, and told him about his complaint. The magician advised the treatment described above, and after carrying out these instructions the scab, so the man told me, quickly disappeared!

F
755 The following is another cure for the same complaint. Get a pod of lupine after the harvest, and after the seeds within it have been prepared for food. Then press the pod with one finger three, five, or seven times, repeating meanwhile the same words as in the previous cure. The lupine is prepared for food by frequent im-
F
752 mersion in hot water; the water is then drained off, and the lupines
751 mixed with salt. They will then keep for a considerable time.

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755 If a child has a cough the mother may go to a magician, who takes one of the narrow leaves off a palm-branch and writes a charm on it. He then rolls up the leaf, tying it with a string which is long enough to hang round the child's neck (Fig. 125). I have seen several children wearing these supposed cures for a cough, and I have one or two in my possession.

In Asyūṭ Province I was told that three leaves must be plucked from a palm-tree that has been inherited by the sick child's family from a relative, and that the following charms should be written on each leaf:

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[776]

"Samkin, Samkin, Samkin.
Sam'akin, Sam'akin, Sam'akin.
Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin, Sam'ukin."[1]

"Go away, coughing, for the sake of the Mighty God, and leave as soon as you can."

[1] These are said to be Syrian names of God.

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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the
753 colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

751 754 822 231 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 755 782 262 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother, or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation, taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

[776]

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *karīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

[774]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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COPTS MR10

SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *ʿafrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *ʿafrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile. 794 513

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village. 775 776

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying *"Akh! akh! akh!"* ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The 407 312 [165] 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIV

'AFĀRĪT

AMONG the various supernatural beings who figure conspicuously in the life of Egyptian peasants are the *'afārīt* (singular *'afrīt*). This word is usually translated in dictionaries 'devils' or 'demons,' as distinct from the *ginn*, who are, properly speaking, the good spirits.[1] The peasants, however, so I have found, employ the words *ginn* and *'afārīt* indiscriminately, the latter word being more commonly used. The *'afārīt* are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intent who wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enter into anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfered with.

The *'afārīt* are supposed to live under the earth, where they form an organized society, with a king at their head. They haunt, so it is believed, springs and wells in uninhabited regions, such as the desert, and the narrow paths which wind about through the cultivation. There are other places, even on high roads, which are known by those versed in such matters to 'belong,' as they say, to *'afārīt*.

On a recent visit to Egypt a charming Rest-house with a good garden was generously placed at my disposal by the Egyptian Government (Fig. 134). It was my custom, when the weather was hot, to sit out in the garden every evening, where some of my village friends would join me, drink coffee, and have a chat. Among them was a small dealer in antiquities, who had a considerable knowledge of the folklore of the people. He told me one evening in the course of conversation that the road which ran past my house had, some years back, been much haunted by *'afārīt*, and that a portion of the

[1] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 283 ff., and also his translation of *The Arabian Nights* (London, 1883), vol. i, pp. 26 f. (notes to Introduction).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ground facing the house on which a mosque has lately been erected, had especially belonged to them. They were, of course, driven from this spot when the mosque was built, and since the introduction of motors and telephones, to which they strongly object, the road also had been made uninhabitable for them. They have therefore taken refuge in the Rest-house garden, where several people claim to have seen them. Three such appearances occurred during my residence.

One night, while my guard was enjoying a peaceful sleep, he

FIG. 134. THE REST-HOUSE AND ITS HAUNTED GARDEN

suddenly awoke in terror and saw towering above him a huge figure in the form of a man, which remained standing thus for a minute or two and then vanished. On another occasion the same guard saw an *'afrīt*, in the form of a dog, run round the garden, pass the windows of the Government offices overlooking it, and then vanish. About a week later, as my servant was crossing the garden on his way from the house to the kitchen, carrying a lighted lamp in his hand, the light was suddenly put out, though there was no wind, and presently he saw a shadow run along in the same direction as that taken by the dog. This, he said, when he recounted to me his adventure, was an *'afrīt*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

F 776 392 782

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessed ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F [791] [791]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

E 264 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *'afārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *'afrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *'afārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *'afrīteh* (feminine form of *'afrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, F
extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left. When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*, speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. F C 342 469 F C 842 755

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. F C 782 756 [152]

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. F C 782 776 755

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many F C 513 776

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!" C 776

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it. F

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F 776 784 F [823] F [326] [327] F

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared. C [469] E [241] C [788] E

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly. F 776 E [304] C F [794]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 342 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 627 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳandīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rūḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

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he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

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F C 796 688

of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

F C 796 783

Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

F C 783

It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *ḳibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

F C [783]

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

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F A 844 553 847 [983] A F 775 A [776] A F 774 776

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

A [852] [532]

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

A [113]

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

F A [775] [776] [779]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

G [412] [243]

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with '*fly*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ḥbn*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

F A 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

F A [791]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sˁw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an '*afrit* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told[5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr[8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

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[1] Dr G. Scholem refers me to T. Canaan, *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914), p. 22, who states that "The tribes of demons are governed by princes. There are seven chief princes. . . . They are called Murrah, Maḏhab, el-Aḥmar, Barkân, Shemhûrish, el-Abyaḍ, and el-Meimûn." See also E. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du nord* (Algiers, 1909), p. 120.

[2] See note 1. Barakân, or Barkân, means 'Shining One.' He appears as Barakon in an invocation addressed to him in the *Clavicula Salomonis*; see H. Gollancz, *Sepher Maphteah Shelomo (Book of the Key of Solomon), an exact Facsimile of an original Book of Magic in Hebrew* (Oxford, 1914), pp. xii ff.

[3] For the use of his name in charms see F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Égypte antique de l'ancien empire jusqu'à l'époque copte* (Paris, 1925), vol. i, p. 158; vol. ii, pp. 169 f., 171 f., 174 f., 178, 182.

[4] Otherwise not known. He is not included in the well-known list in note 1.

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawaga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (**).

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

displaced, and that she can by such means put them into their 755
place again.

VIII

"SPLITTING OF THE EYE" (BAZLAT-AL-'AIN)

THIS is used generally to mean chronic granular ophthalmia. Those afflicted employ for its cure a piece of fleshy red meat[1] which is hung in front of the afflicted eye or eyes.

I do not know any good this piece of meat does except that it quickly becomes a source of putrefaction, and a collector of the [164] different morbid causes which lead to the complete loss of the patient's eye [p. 22].

IX

AMULETS[2]

THE common people constantly have recourse to those who 751
monopolize the art of making amulets, in order to obtain help by their means when calamity troubles them and sickness makes them complain. Whenever a person is afflicted by 754
some hysterical weakness or nervous disease, his relatives 753
say of him that he is certainly bewitched, or in possession of a 756
jinnī. They do not know even yet that sorcery and the interpenetration of bodies (by evil spirits) are absurd and falsified by all evidence. No intelligent person has ever accepted such things, unless what Hārūt and Mārūt[3] introduced in order to

[1] [Sometimes instead, a small bored red bead, usually a carnelian (*'aḥīḥ*) is suspended from the head of the sufferer. Tr.]

[2] [*Tamā'im*, plural of *tamīma*. Tr.]

[3] [These are the names of two rebellious angels of Babylon, who were noted magicians. According to the Koran, ii, 96, the devils at the time of King Solomon taught mankind sorcery "*and what had been revealed to the two angels in Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt.*" The identification of the names is uncertain. They may be of Zoroastrian origin. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Islam, sub voce*; and Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 1926, pp. 146-8. Margoliouth (in the *Moslem World*, 1928, p. 74) endeavours to trace their names to the Jamnes and Mambres or Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the time of Moses (2 Timothy III. 8), and of the N.T. Apocrypha (Gospel of Nicodemus v. 5). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

754 mislead people, as is revealed in the Noble Koran. And no
753 one can tell whether the people instructed by *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*
776 did not divulge this secret through the ages, until sorcery perished along with them, since it was difficult for them to put it into writing.

In the story of John Sīrāf [?] (جان سيراف),[1] the prince of sorcerers in the land of the English, who claimed that he was the successor (*khalīfa*) of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, there is much that will convince you of their errors and their lies. [p. 23.] For that person resided in an old castle, surrounded by trees thick with leaves, so that anyone beholding it is made to fancy that it is an ancient cavern over which the ages have passed. Sick people come to him and interview him in a large room, the walls of which are variegated with tapestry of a deep black colour, on which are outlined ugly-looking pictures, at which the joints of the body tremble. They think that they are in the Valley of the Jinn and the Devils. Before long the walls of this chamber split at the four corners, and those present then hear a terrible din, a little after which there are revealed men of ugly appearance and hideous shapes, with drawn swords in their hands. Then what sick person (or "bewitched" according to their opinion) would not be impressed by these phenomena, and his heart be perturbed with fear, due to the deceits of that scheming wretch, especially when the room, in spite of its being so spacious, is lit by a single candle?

Then the sorcerer takes the patient by himself into one of the small rooms from which the assistants have first gone out, and making him sit down, mutters over his head certain names and gibberish which he has fabricated. Next he puts the seal upon these absurdities by giving the patient water which he asserts has a secret power and a hidden influence, one of its peculiarities being that it expels the Jinn from the body and undoes the work of bewitchment. Such were his habits and practices until he heaped up great wealth and acquired large possessions. When he died last year (1891) leaving no heir, the government took over his belongings and gave them to almshouses, and objects of piety and benevolence.

[p. 24.] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready

[1] [I have been unable to trace the source of this strange tale. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p.24] The North African (or Moorish) quacks have a ready 756
market in Egypt because it is the common belief of the deluded people of that land that the Moors have great ability in casting out the Jinn from the bodies of mankind. I saw an example of this two years ago, when I was called in to treat a person [164] suffering from chronic meningitis. Whilst I was with him one day, suddenly those present stood up out of respect. I turned round to know the reason why, and beheld a man, a Moor with a long beard, of a ghastly colour and squalid appearance. He had entered the room, and those present were going up to him and kissing his hand to obtain a blessing thereby. I asked who he was, and was informed that he was Al-Ḥāgg Muḥammad of Tlemcen, and that he had been brought in in order to 755
drive out the accursed devil that had entered into the body of this poor wretch, and had made him toss upon a bed of pain and suffering.[1] When I heard this, I said, Allah help us! The Moorish Shaikh then took something out of his bag and threw it into a flaming fire, which they brought him at his request. At once there went up a smoke which almost choked the bystanders. Those who feared for their lives went out of the room, and contented themselves with watching from the door what else might happen. I myself remained, I am glad to say, with the others inside. I saw him after this incensing "operation" arise and approach the patient, and tie one of his big toes with a thread of silk, the end of which he himself held in his hand. Next he began saying to those present, "Verily the *jinnī* which is in the patient, is one of the 755 children of the unbelieving kings, and he will only go out from 756 the body by being condemned and despised and ill-treated. [153] So it is you, who are here present, who must beat him." He pointed to the sick patient, and two of those present [p. 25] procured pieces of cane, bared their forearms and began beating him furiously, whilst he was crying for mercy and groaning. And the wonder of it was that the father of the poor fellow, who had up till then been treating him with clemency and gentleness, was one of the two who undertook to expel the *jinnī* from the body of the patient, although if they had only known it they were really trying to drive the

[1] [The term generally used to describe such a person is *mu'afrit*, which means possessed by an evil spirit, or *'afrit*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

955 776 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

756 787 [539] 796

"Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife" enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

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because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Ḳāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhdar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

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the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a Shaikh from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fil[illegible]. Tr.]

842 Some women who are barren carry a sinique of wax dipped in
800 powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in
[878] fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

842 THIS is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die.
955 The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

842 They explain all this by saying that the husband has a
776 mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *karīna* kills them. To prevent the *karīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Habbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaik*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 30], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Karīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *karīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhiltya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

776 855 69 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say, "God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Sudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [756] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [789] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

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for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḳ*, plural of *gōḳa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the Grand *Shaikh*, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or *Shaikh Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Ḥuseiniya near 'Abbāsiya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the footprints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

of the night and drowsiness was on the point of overcoming us, behold we heard the trample of hoofs near the house, and it suddenly occurred to us that it might be the mule. Our thought was not groundless for we actually encountered a black mule carrying a sack, and in the midst of the sack something projecting which we thought to be the severed head. So the master of the house led the mule to his home (after there was almost a conflict amongst us almost to the shedding of blood, each wanting to take the mule to his home in order to be " blessed " by it, or more likely in order that it might become accustomed to be present every year in his house. The result was that we came to an agreement, through fear of the arrival of some new shareholder who would diminish the shares). So when the mule graced the home of our host he hastened to offer an unstinted measure of wheat and barley as food for the noble animal. Meanwhile one of our friends was judging the sack from its outside appearance. He informed us that it was stuffed with gold dust and not cash. His proof of that was that he bit with his teeth on one of the corners of the sack and the gold dust yielded under his molars. Then the master of the house chid him and said : " Wilt thou scoff at the She-Mule of the Throne ? " Then that fellow answered him by grasping him by the throat, saying : " Wilt thou not be quiet after we have allowed you to have a private view of her noble self, that you seek to fall betwen her and me ! " [p. 102]. Both fell a-boxing until their voices rose and a company of the village night-watchmen assembled. Just then a black servant, a muleteer, appeared, and asked them to stop (saying) : " Did you not see a mule with a sack on its back ? It has strayed from the road and it is loaded with ashes (*kuşrmıll*)." Those present were astonished, and for a moment the earth almost shook under us. The people knew our ignorance. But as for the mule, it had finished eating what had been given to it, and the muleteer took it away, laughing at us.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Taḏhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

755 out the contents of the egg in the dark place, he takes a lentil grain and places it on a tumour and recites over it this charm: Oh, lentil become a tumour! Oh, tumour become a lentil!

He then places the lentil inside the egg, and so on until the number of lentils equals the number of tumours. Then he runs in haste to an eastern wall on which the rays of the sun are striking and buries them in it, and the tumours fall away in consequence, in a few days, not exceeding a week. And this is truly beneficial according to the story.

[754] *The true explanation.* We return, as we already said in Part I (p. 27) to the question of demons (*'afārīt*). Often they (i.e. the "old wives") assert that the hen (particularly a black one, since that is mentioned in the "prescription") has an obedient servant for herself, her eggs and their possessor, and by the secret of his influence upon diseases, or by his powerful relationship with the demon of diseases, the tumours will fall [753] away. They believe that every disease has a demon, as is the current creed among the village witches, according to another opinion.

Often the shrinkage of the vessels feeding these tumours is brought about by a certain degree of imaginative influence. [p. 26.] Then (the tumours) wither gradually, and this is as far as medical explanation of their falling off is possible, if what the narrators say is correct.

XIII

CATARACT AND AMMONIA

181 EGYPT is indeed a happy hunting ground for every trader and quack. How simple our Egyptian *fellāḥ* is! He loses his life and cheapens his body for the experiments of those who trade in spirits. But the *fellāḥ* of Egypt is not to be blamed, for he has no instructor.

164 There came to me one day a patient complaining of his eyes. On examination I saw the left eye-ball protruding from the

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE ḲARĪN AND ḲARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellāḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *ḳarīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923.

976 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *akrān* (pl. of *karīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *akrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *karīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *akrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *akrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *karīn*, or her *karīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *karīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *karīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *karīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

976 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— , or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *akrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *akrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

976 123 787 Again, a man's *karīn* marries the *karīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *karīn* or her *karīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

773 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be
776 immune.

[751] The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise
[843] she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born,
[304] when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of
751 the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes
[761] that her *ḳarīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 A *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed
753 the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is sorry and expressed
[755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother
753 knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are
755 resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there
778 is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself
[789] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 7 n

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7 n A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

7 n [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *durra* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *ḳarīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 753 [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *ḳarīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *ḳarīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on S[illegible], go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *ḳarīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] 7/h

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

7/h [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448–451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrān, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the [751] mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarīna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarīna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayūm and Asyūṭ Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarīneh* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarīn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarīna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *aḥrān* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afārīt*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the [751] iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyūṭ Province and also from one in Fayūm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarīn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarīneh* (fem. of *ḳarīn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellāḥīn*, a man is born with a *ḳarīneh* and a woman with a *ḳarīn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex. [176] [114] [184]

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellāḥîn*.[1]

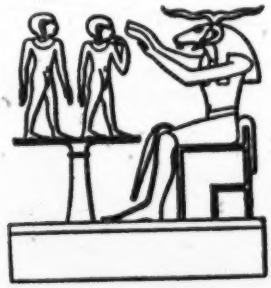

FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *karîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Bahri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth. [171]

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *karîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *karîn* and a woman a *karînah* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellāḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it. [184]

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

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and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at [755] getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's [782] body, heart and brain.

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/82 cont'd/ 776

There are 66 of these sultans, but neither my informant nor any other Kūdiya could cite them all. According to the information obtained by me about the Sultans, their names, characters, and desires, they can be classified as

(a) certain regional groups or families.
(b) spirits of natural or supernatural phenomena.
(c) coptic and islamic spirits.

(a) Regional groups:

1. The Sudanic group, comprising "Sudani Tambura" spirit, "El-Set El-Sudania", his sister.
2. The Abyssianian group comprising "Sultan El-Habash" (Habash is the adjective form of the name Haba'sat. This is a tribe belonging to one of the early and important Semitic migrations to Abyssinia and giving its name to the whole region), "Hawanim -El-Habash" and "Habouba or El-Set-El Kebira" i.e. the grandmother, his sisters.

/83/3. The Egyptian group, comprising "El Sa'idy Abu Denfa (Upper Egyptian) and the "Askari or Lewa", i.e. the soldier or general.

4. The Arabian group: "El-Arabi or El-Badawi"
5. The North African group: "El-Maghrabi"
6. The Turkish group with "Yurra Bey", his sister "Rokash Hanem" and Sultan Mama.

(b) Spirits of natural and supernatural phenomena:

1. The Fire group: "Sultan-El-Jinn-Al-Ahmar" i.e. the king of the red spirits or jinn and his sister.
2. The River or Sea group: "Sultan-El-Bahari", his sister and another female spirit called "Set Safina", i.e. the lady boat.
3. The mountain group: "El Gabalawi" and "Gendar" (7)

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(7) This may originally have been the name of Gondar town in Abyssinia, one of the centres of the Agau tribe; if this is the case, we can classify him with the Abyssinian group.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/87 cont'd/ 755 776 171

the Agao sky-god Zar became a possessive spirit in the belief of the Abyssinians (15).

The word jar is to be found with little variations among the Abyssinians. Jar, among the Bileu, Daro among the Gongo, Yero among the Kafficho; it survived denoting an evil spirit among the Amharic speaking people in Abyssinia, (Zar), as Sar among the Somali tribes and as Jara among the Hadiya. (16)

Contrary to the specialized meanings and precise contents of the word among the different tribes of Abyssinia, we find the word Zar in Egypt, in the Sudan and in Arabia, as a general term designating possessive spirits as well as the ceremonies performed for them. Thus we can conclude that the Zar in the countries just mentioned was originally derived from Abyssinia. When a people takes over a cultural phenomenon from an other, there is a distinct tendency towards generalization. Considering the great appreciation which the beautiful Abyssinian slave-girls found in the whole Middle-East, we can assume that they brought with them both the word and the conception of the "Zar", especially as we know that many women believe in it in Abyssinia, in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia. 755 776 177 [171] [171]

2. The notion: In Abyssinia as well as in the Sudan, in Egypt and in Arabia there is a notion that these spirits possess human beings, mostly women and that they never leave a body they inhabit. The history of this notion is somewhat confused in all countries with the exception of Abyssinia. There are two stories about the origin of the spirits told in Abyssinia: (17) One says that Eve had thirty children and that she hid fifteen of them when God 776 [171]

(15) Cerulli, "Zar", Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1934, p. 1217

(16) Trimingham J.S., Islam in Aethiopia, Oxford 1952, p. 257

(17) Leslau W., An Aethiopian Argot of people possessed by a spirit. Africa vol. XIX, No 3, July 1949, pp. 204/212

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balā Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/88 cont'd/ 755 171 [534]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [196] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 755 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: [192] bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often [776] long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmîye (thieves) and 'afārît (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullê ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight [172] than with us. Moreover, Abu Gūrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an [262] important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

And the stone was soft for the Prophet,
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet,
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

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782

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 2.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 1. [776]

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed dāḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardē ḍallil ʿalê.
Be-ṭarfē šālo el-ʾaṣab,
farado we-ṣalla ʿalê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me".

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban. [298]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

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●776
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[769]

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 1—4 describe the building covering the tomb of the saint.

[211]

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bāb in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ʿatabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bāb mezauwaʾ, ya Seiyid!*
Win ʿišt ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
waʾid ʾanadīlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

2. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, 1. 2.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

9. 539x 776

A song of Egyptian origin, containing in part the same verses as our own, was communicated to Dalman (Palaestinischer Diwan, p. 141) in Sidon, by a sailor. Of the first verse he remarks: The flag-staff with the crescent, which is mounted over the tomb, is supposed to sway, as a sign that the saint promises to grant the request made to him. [787]

Hizz el-hilāl, ya Seiyid,
yabu bēra' nabawi!
Win 'išt ana, ya Seiyid,
lazūrak sanawi.

Shake the crescent, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the Prophet's flag!
And if I live, O Seiyid,
I shall visit thee yearly.

2. The flag of the Prophet is green, as are the turbans and sometimes even the clothes, of his descendants in Egypt (the Sherifs). [292]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

12.

×539

The Transitoriness of Earthly Riches.

To a once-rich but now impoverished beauty. God alone is eternal; earthly glory passes away.

Alla wed-dāim Alla,
Alla we-la dāim ṛēro.
Bēḍa u-fēn ʿabīdik?
Mātu wel-mulkē lalla!

Allah, and the Eternal One is Allah,
Allah, and there is nothing eternal beside him.
Thou white maiden, where are thy black slaves?
They are dead, and the kingdom is Allah's!

13.

The Sigh of the Debtor.

[776] Abulʿéle el-Ḥosēni is the saint, whose tomb lies in Būlāʾ (Bulak), the suburb of Cairo.

Yabu-l-ʿéle, ya Ḥosēni,
Yabu-l-ʿéle, tāfi dēni!

O Abulʿéle, O Ḥosēni,
O Abulʿéle, pay my debts!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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43.

Hard Labor.

x539
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Work at the shādûf (see No. 42) at which the laborer stands up to the waist in water, unceasingly drawing the pail at the end of the lever up and down, is considered one of the hardest of tasks. The songs which they sing while thus employed, of which numbers 42—46 are examples, are usually very melancholy, both in words and melody.

Ḥakamtê, ya bēn, bi-šan'i?
baḥbaḥ el-ḫaiye!
La ummê tibki
wa-la 'amme
5 *wa-la ḫaiye.*

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps (for me),
No aunt,
5 No sister.

[776]

1. "Strangling", namely: from the hard labor. According to Maḥmûd, bēn is a designation for God.

3—5. I, poor fellow, have so little any way, and no one on earth to love me.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sick with Longing.

90.

539x
832

Yā ma inte wāḥišni,
ya gamīl, we-rūḥi fīk!
Ya me'ānis 'albi, le-mīn aškīk?
aškīk lilli 'ādir, 'ādir yihdīk
5 *we-yballiṛ eṣ-ṣābir amalo.*
Ana ḥāli le-bu'dak lam yirḍīk.

Oh, how lonely thou makest me,
Lovely one, while my spirit is with thee!
O companion of my heart, to whom shall I complain of thee?
I will complain of thee to the Mighty One, — [782]
mighty to guide thee
5 And make the patient one attain (the goal of) his hope.
It will not please thee (when thou seest) what is my state because of thine absence.

4. Of course God; compare No. 87, l. 2. He, alone, has power, so to guide the girl, that she may finally listen to her lover. [776]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[988] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
● 776 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[778] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

753 796 [776]

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 873 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when [171]
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for instance, that of Hermes on the 10th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [176]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [153]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776 into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753 chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262 fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789 gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorûk*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[787 barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776 The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431 the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
[262 walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431 and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553 is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around [533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short 764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to [776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper 764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst [535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the [154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their [179] nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger [554] is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate [177] villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money [464] to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the 476 villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [480] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḫṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
● 777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

 PIT.

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([29]). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([41])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

792 842 777

764 [765] The function of women mourners is also traditional. A fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*) specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([41a]).

[767] 535

533 538 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also accompanies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

[534]

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (44).

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers,
and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without
them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for
as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have
taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels
an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice
or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swell-
ings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment
clearly depends on what plants they have within reach,
and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

Those peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (44) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these
sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid
on fellah superstitions. They arerec orded with a certain
condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on
the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no
point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing ori-
ginal in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole
of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond
Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of
the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fella-
heen are even more effective than their manner of life in
isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which
'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he
founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself
weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these
ritual observances.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

choking, and that the speed with which the disease declines depends proportionately upon the employment of violence or gentleness in that "operation." But the most astonishing thing is that the sick one, if recovery be vouchsafed him, goes home loud in the praise of that "old woman," saying, "The disease was creeping about in my feet in a terrifying manner."

And what did this creeping amount to (had this inexperienced fool known) except the numbness of his nerves resulting from the compression of the spinal cord, and the suffusion of the brain? And were it not for the fact that he has but few days left to spend in his folly, the deceitfulness of the "prescription" of that old ogress would disappear. As for the lemon and the common salt, sometimes they are of advantage if the sourness of the stomach be slight, but they cause serious injuries if it be severe. And since the "old woman" who "prescribed" this is ignorant of these [p. 10] details, her making use of the salt and the lemon mingled with oven dust in curing—or rather in killing—her patient was only for the purpose of intensifying the imagination and gilding the deceit.

II

THE MASH'ŪMA

THE common people mean thereby ill-omened (fevers). Their "prescriptions" would make a bereaved widow laugh! For example, if the village be under a fortunate star, and there be found in it "the bone of the unbeliever"—one of the bones of the metatarsus—which is the stock in trade of one of the "old women," or of whoever gains possession of it, it is far ahead of all neighbouring towns and villages. A very old man, one of those who were present at the Siege of Sebastopol, related to me that he almost met his death in this siege whilst he was occupied in extracting this bone from a corpse in the firing line.

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

[p. 12.] But if it be impossible to find such a bone, then the "old woman," entrusted with the cure of the invalid, orders one of the patient's relatives to go alone in the second part of the eve of Friday into the cemetery and bring back a brick from a grave in which no one has been buried for a long time, and place it under the head of the fevered patient. It will improve his health.

The "old women" also employ for a relapse a wonderful "prescription," which I have seen with my own eyes in the case of a patient whom I was treating for a violent intermittent fever. When I was by his side asking him how he felt, and thinking about his cure, I heard a commotion in the courtyard of the house. On investigating the matter, I saw a woman in one of the corners of the room where the patient was, busy muttering spells over some dry cakes of cattle-dung. Outside I saw another "old woman" of an evil countenance, with a white girdle over her black clothes, bearing on her head a sieve with a great crowd of boys behind her pelting her with stones, and jeering at her. She took no notice of them nor scolded them (because the "prescription" demands that), but continued advancing thus towards the door of the sick-chamber. Then when she reached it she began calling out, "Is there anyone here in a relapse (*mankūs*)?" The other woman who was inside the room answered, *mā 'indanā mankūs walā wag' fī rūs*. "There is no one in a relapse here, nor even with a headache," and she hit her in the face with one of the cakes, over which she had ceased reciting the spell. But the other kept on asking and the other answering her, after the same fashion, until the twelve cakes were all used up. Then the "old woman" outside carried them in the sieve upon her head and went off, I know not where. [p. 13.] I was seized with the greatest wonder and astonishment, and on asking for an explanation, was informed that this "prescription" was the cure for a relapse. As for those cakes, the "old woman" would throw them into a disused well that same night. My comment was that in that case there was no necessity for salts of quinine, and I withdrew from their midst leaving them to their folly.

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[3]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[3] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[564]

learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

[118]

After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

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use d.

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Aysha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another 821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God 761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts F [M] thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven F days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was [853] last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F 761 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives 895 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, 853 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. 825 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly 853 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what- 778 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a 262 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must 789 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of 853 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

F 846 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, 854 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her 776 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of 789 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls 789 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
774 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
[783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789] who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
774 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
● 778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

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F C 553 852

forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

F C [1008]

F C [965]

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

F 307 852

In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

F C 302 852 778

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

F C [291] [532] [192]
F C [262]
F C [425]
F C [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [778] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. 789
Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a 842
mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women 842
will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing 778
that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women 789
sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this [775]
belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's 842
tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to 782
make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain 782

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
● 778 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
764 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
775 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

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842 789 123

my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

778 842

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

231 192 133

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

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FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [779]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fiḳīh*, [767]
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [293]
remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [752]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]
E [293] [297] [778]

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

E 765 788 783

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other. 241 312

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus: [533] 152 283 415

> *Shawādīf*,
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God? [533]
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. 241 312 Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. 231 When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the 243 789 978

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps. 243 492

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries. 243 407 251 [748] [965]

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1] [343] [285]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and 243 465

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to viṣit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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F 791 787 776

sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F 755 787 776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F C 791 778

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

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SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 622 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 ●798 766 941 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 775 766 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building.

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young 'Ali held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

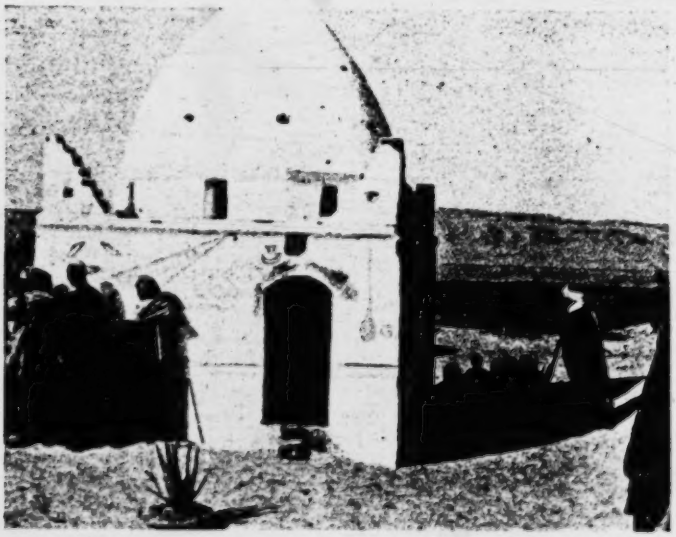

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN 'ALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old 'Ali by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old 'Ali as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan 'Ali's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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969 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [264] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [969] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 786 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt, ● 778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his 531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder [212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a [794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the [782] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place 769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves [794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their [788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of [171]
Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

[794]
292
[798]

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
253 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F C 346 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

F C [178]

F C [133]

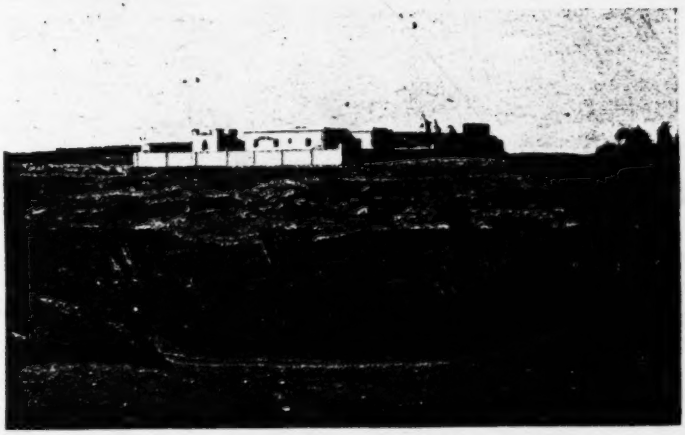

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

F C 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [443] [52]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fiḳīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.
[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.
[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.
[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

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The modern shādūf (pp. 190f.) finds its exact counterpart in paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

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F
A
789
178
241
A
[312]
[532]

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

A
[532]

F
A
431
465
241

FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

● 778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sîdi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only
[782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man,
527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([50]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in-
[769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday
[527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In
312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool
311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees.
316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

THE MUSHĀHARA

● 908 THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

908 751 842 755 The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

908 751 THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the above-mentioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images [903] of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

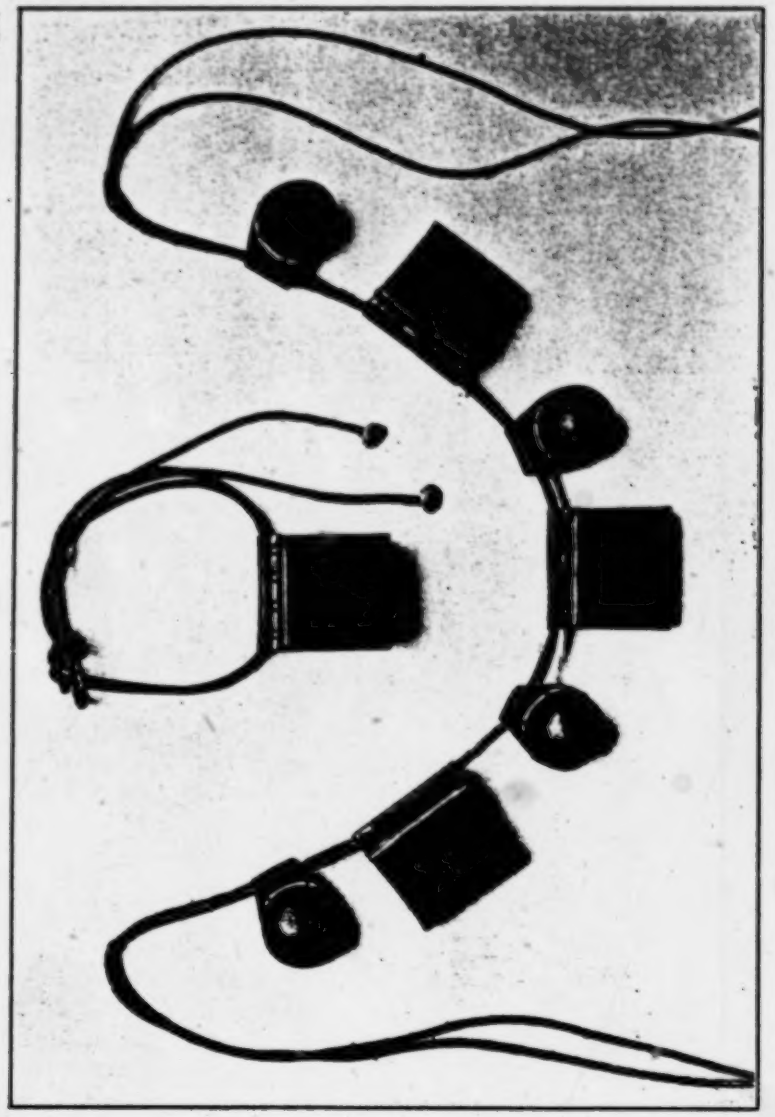
TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥīn of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṣ-ṣarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

778
151



MOSLEM AMULETS
Two stamped leather amulets of the kind used in Egypt to-day as prophylactics.
(By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

Facing p. 27.

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigāb*.]

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 778
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl 753
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother 764
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throw- 756
ing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūsharwān. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

[773] [776] hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[751] [843] The *karînah* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrîts*, lives for ever.

[304] [751] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *karînah* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karînahs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

[776] [753] A *karînah* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karînah* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karîn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karîn*. When he is sorry and expressed [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

[776] [753] [755] [778] If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *karînah* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyût Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karînah*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 1/1 .

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 1/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karînah* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh.

[755] A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168 — analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

778
755
[76A]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHÛN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S evil eye.

751
843

باسم الله المتعلق بالأقانيم هو الإله العظيم خالق جميع المنظورات القوية الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون تتعبد الملائكة من الهيبة
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وذراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجاب
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل	ي	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
توكل يا ميكائيل	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
توكل يا سرافائيل	B	[illegible]	[illegible]	111
توكل يا سوسيال	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

توكل يا سوسيال بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعرشه الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرق
القرينة الملعونة وسيرها بالنار

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE KARÎN AND KARÎNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

5.

539x
782

Prayer to the Prophet.

Ya nabīne, ya sākin Ṭēbe,
u-ʿalēk, ya nabīne, u-ṣallēne.
Yōm el-ʾiyāme išfaʿ fīne,
wiššaffaʿ, ya rasūl Alla,
5 *nuṣṣ el-layāli we-ḥakam Alla.*

O our Prophet, who dwellest in Ṭēbe,
For thee, O our Prophet, we entreat Allah's blessing.
At the Day of Resurrection speak for us,
And mediate for us, thou messenger of Allah,
5 At midnight — but Allah's will be done.

1. Ṭēbe is another name for the city of Medīna, in which the Prophet Moḥammed lies buried. [778]
2. That is: "we say: Allah bless Moḥammed and save him".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

10.

The Well Zemzem.

×539
●778
823

The well Zemzem is the miraculous well in the Mosque of Mekka. Pilgrims drink from it and are accustomed to carry vials of its water home with them. In a very similar song of Dalman's (P. 8; from Ḥawāra in Aglûn in Palestine) the Zemzem well is addressed, but it means a girl. Perhaps our song is also to be thus understood.

Ya bīrî Zemzem, salabik selāsil,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lim-mesāfir.
Ya bīrî Zemzem salabik ḥarīr,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lil-ʿalīl.

Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like chains,
And to drink from thee is medicine for the traveler.
Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like silk,
[757] And to drink from thee is medecine for the sick.

1. 3. This is a draught-well. Its ropes are as strong as chains and as soft as silk.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

86.

A Mighty Helper.

539x
832
[778]

Compare the very similar little song from Cairo, in Lane II p. 81 (hence, of the year 1836)[1]. "He of Embābe" is Shēkh Isma'īn, whose tomb lies in Embābe, near Cairo. In Lane's song the appeal is made to Shēkh Aḥmed of Ṭanṭa (compare No. 8).

Ya-mbābi, yalla, ya-mbābi,
tigma'ni 'ala 'izz aḥbābi!
Win gāni ḥabībi-l-lēle,
la'mil-lo el-kašmīr ḍullēle,
5 *wa'ul-lo: salamāt, ya ḥabībi,*
'izz el-layāli el-lēle.

Thou of Embābe, up, thou of Embābe,
Unite me with my best beloved!
And if my beloved comes to me to night,
I will make for her a baldachin of the cashmere shawl,
5 And say to her: Welcome, my beloved,
This night is the fairest of nights!

4. The couch shall be decked with costly stuffs.

---

[1]) The preceding song in Lane (II p. 81) I also once heard sung, but unfortunately failed to write it down:

Everyone whose eyes are sleeping
Need not think the lover sleeps.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory
[782] of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pil-
[188] grimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaalan, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors,
[174] namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

796 [778] [535] [786] [878] [943] [787]

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

576 796 [492]

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

796 541 [578] [174] [534] [625] [635] [535] [533]

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

[796] [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [443] [252] [521] [526]

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556 back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

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613 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the
574 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder,
613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is
682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call
687 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be
[779] punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is
156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com-
182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age.
561 From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as
[791] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out-
561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the
888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship
[576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men,
560 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

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to and decided by a Government superior to local sanctions, the esteem of local institutions has been undermined and the traditional structure of authority has lost some of its grip.

If the villagers have increasingly resorted to Government procedures in their disputes, they still consider both Government and Government officials as agencies of imposition and control, and hence to be feared. The identification of any Effendi wearing European suit and fez with a policeman is indicative of the role of the Government in the people's mind. The first strong impact of centralized Government was probably during the reign of Mohammed Ali, when its pressures were felt through conscription, the rigid collection of taxes, and the registration of land. For a long time in Egypt this apprehension held towards the Government was connected with education, since education and conscription were associated during the days of Mohammed Ali, while hitherto war had been the business of a certain caste and farmers were not concerned with it. The fear of Government authorities is reflected in the story of the old man in the village who had been very annoyed and did not speak to his son for a long time because the latter was entangled in a dispute for which the father had to be called to the police station to give evidence. The father considered his going to the police station as a humiliation brought to him by his son.

It is also considered as a betrayal to report cases of infectious diseases to the authorities, as this would cause trouble to the family by involving the father and the mother in governmental queries and procedures. To keep away from governmental institutions was always the safest policy. An example of this is the failure of the branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank established in 1938 to help the farmers to have their crops secured, to borrow money accordingly, and thus to rescue them from falling a prey to usury. The bank has been in fact mainly used by outside crop merchants to buy crops from the village and store them until prices improved. It only functioned to its full capacity during the last war when governmental legislation compelled every farmer to sell part of his crop to the Government according to the land he cultivated. The villagers have never taken to the benefits of the bank, partly because it involved becoming implicated with Government procedures, and partly because it implied loss of prestige, due to dealing with interest, which is religiously forbidden. For the same reason, life insurance is never entertained by the villagers, nor by a great section of the Egyptian society as a whole, partly because it involves interest, as well as because it presents a challenge to man's destiny. In 1950 the branch of the bank in the village had to be closed down. Yet this does not mean that usury is not practised amongst the villagers in Silwa in spite of being condemned by the Koran, although it is not widespread and is avoided as much as possible.[1]

[1] M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, in talking about the Koranic prohibition of 'riba' (increase, interest) in Moslem society remarks that 'it was in that very society . . . that

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pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major contribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. Moreover, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Haj Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAHR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, [709] however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the [834] women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 1755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

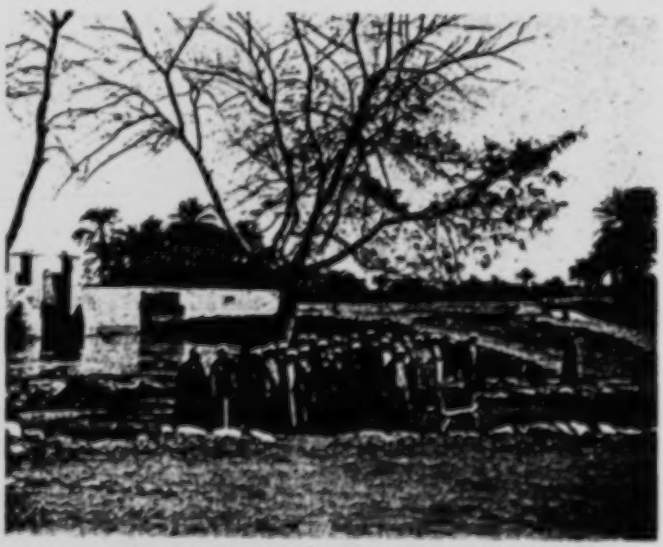

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 144 174 175 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

C F 144 779 186 It has been said that the Copts are the purest representatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns, where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

F 142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.

Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F 782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

683 rushed upon the young man. He fell, pierced by several
579 knife wounds. Bakr's men, as soon as they heard of the crime, bore down on the spot with rifles and staves, crying "Allah, Allah!". The others replied with the same cries, and the battle began in earnest. An hour later there were three dead and many wounded. By midnight the two parties, determined to fight to the death, had taken up positions in the hills. The police had the greatest difficulty in restoring order.

186 Race hatred between Arab and fellah, and religious hatred
● 779 between Copt and Moslem, though lulled by common lives and interests, are never completely extinguished, and furnish the explanation of many a drama.

571 So trust and mistrust persist side by side. The main
181 source of both is the soil, which unites the fellaheen if it is
186 threatened, but divides them as they own or covet it. Thus
[621] the peasant group, united against the outside world, is divided within itself. Patriotism and nationality mean no more to the fellaheen than the ideas of co-operation, public interest, or civic pride. The village in Egypt is not a community in the social sense; it is not an organism, but a mass.

Similarity in their mode of life, and propinquity, do not necessarily create a deep relationship among human beings. A certain spiritual life is needed, or at least a certain personality, to make social relations possible. The fellah appears to be as little of a personality as he is of an individual. Absorbed in the soil, and oppressed by those above him, he lives collectively but not socially. Though living in a herd, he remains solitary and aloof.

This absence of co-ordination among elements in themselves homogeneous has kept the Egyptian village, the typical peasant group, in the primitive state of a conglomeration lacking either material or intellectual system. Through fifty centuries Government after Government has maintained this formlessness, as it greatly strengthens the central authority.

Such are the common features of the fellaheen, and of the 14,000 places in which they live (").

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".

812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawdga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
782 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (**).

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

1.

Morning Hymn.

539×
This little hymn was sung very often by our boys, — always [461] in the morning, during the first hours of work.

U-ṣabaḥna 'aṣdin Alla,
'ala bābak, ya kerīm, yalla,
'ala bāb min fatah abwābak.
Wa-la ḥaul wa-la 'ūwa illā-bak.

In the morning we turn to Allah.
At thy door (we stand), thou gracious one, Allah,
At the door of him, who hath opened thy doors of mercy.
And there is no might and no strength save in thee.

3. The Prophet Mohammed has opened to mortals the doors [779] to Allah.
4. A frequently used formula, founded on a Koran verse. [796]

114.

*539 832 Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-'a(l)fe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar 'ala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslim'n waḥḥadu Alla!*

[292] "Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
[301] "I have put on the bracelets, sir,
[304] And the green tatooing is on my hand!
[779] 5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Ta'alâ-li, ya wad, ta'alâ-li,
taḥtē ṣagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yūḥ!). [192]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[183] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[182] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[179] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[276] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters.
[521] The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[182] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

527 trifle, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[779] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own special name of *bala*. In the court, or the space in front of the house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candelabra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
[354] water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivities. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot, high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
527 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
535 and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[292] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
[301] over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots; but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533] while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534] under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838] the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 779
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosuf*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [193] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

786 796 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*munshed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-'Agayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-'Agayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-'Azab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-'Azab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-'Azab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

/88 cont'd/ 955 171 [584]

to be masculine, the Tambura feminine (19). Scant knowledge of the bands in Abyssinia forbids further discussion.

d. The sultans: As we have seen there are various groups of sultans in Egypt. In Abyssinia it is believed that living beings are haunted by former Gods degraded to a minor status. In the Sudan it is nearly the same as in Egypt with regard to local spirits, i.e. "Timsah" (crocodile) Turia, Nas-El-Gebal (Turia the people of the mountains) (20). [776]

4. The ceremony: The method of determining the special spirits is different in Egypt and the Sudan. In Abyssinia and the Sudan the Kūdiya orders the musical band to play a special tune for every spirit and the patient sits quietly until she suddenly stands up and begins to dance. This is taken as a sign that the tune of the spirit has inspired and compelled her to dance. The ceremony itself is quite the same as in Egypt, including the demands of the spirits. In Abyssinia blood of the sacrificed animal is drunk. In the Sudan sweets and the bones of the animal are thrown into the river.

5. The Zar-language: There is a special Zar-language to which some Arabic words are added. It seems likely that the Zar-language is a combination of Amharic, Galla and Old-Aethiopian, the dominating language is, however, Amharic. (21) [196] [197]

The Zar, as we can see now, is either a very old practice and belief in the whole area of North-East Africa, or it might have come from Abyssinia. Basically it is formed on the fear of the unintelligible world /89/ and psychological phenomena; it satisfies the unseen powers by offerings. The violent and barbaric dance betrays a very strong African influence, especially the dominance of the 955 781 177 [171]

(19) Zenkovsky, S. Zar and Tambura in Omdurman. Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 31, part I, June 1950, p. 73

(20) Ibid, p. 70, and Trimingham J.S., Islam in the Sudan, Oxford 1949, p. 175

(21) Leslau, W. Ibid, p. 210

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

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Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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sickness is a pious deed. It is often told to a sick person that holy people have suffered from one ailment or another and have endured it willingly for God. 753

All this shows how the villagers' traditional notions about health and sickness are mixed with magical and religious beliefs; God is the afflicter as well as the healer; it is He who has fixed the life span of every person, and this cannot be lengthened or precipitated by a second, much less a minute, unless He wills it. Together with this, there is the belief that hope and propitiation cannot fail to produce some expected results in certain crises of life. [761] [782]

The village has experienced some measure of direct contact with modern medicine as a result of the establishment of a health unit by the Ministry of Health in 1936. This health unit is a wonderful building, situated on the southern border of the village, and is composed of a maternity section, an isolation ward, and a general section. It cost the Government about £E3,000, yet it has never functioned properly or systematically as doctors who came to it could hardly endure life in the village for more than six months, whereupon they tried every possible means to be transferred to towns. The villagers appreciated the health unit at the beginning, but their resentment to it was ironically aroused during the malaria and typhoid epidemic of 1943 on the grounds that sick people were taken away to the isolation ward, and dying away from one's relatives and home is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Their hostility towards it is expressed with reference to its unfortunate location, it being near the cemetery; thus going to the health unit has become psychologically a bad omen. However, the establishment of the health unit has given folk-medicine the greatest challenge, and at present the villagers are becoming increasingly interested in medicine as such, alongside their usual traditional cures. In serious cases the doctor's help is usually sought besides the traditional cures, and it is becoming a sign of social prestige to bring him into the home of the sick; but remaining in hospital for treatment or isolation for contagious diseases is still resisted. 743 177 [164] [761] 757 177

Although one finds that the villagers have adopted certain items of material culture from the town, such as the use of manufactured goods, new types of vegetables, and some medicines, such adoption is a surface substitution. Their ideas about land ownership, the importance of children, family and clan solidarity, categories of respect relationships, sex dichotomy, supernatural sanctions, and the importance of ritual and ceremony in both social and religious life, remain almost unaltered. 177 369

There is, however, one feature in the village's social life that has undergone a certain amount of change as a result of changes in the economic conditions, and that is the role and function of leadership. Till very recently leadership has been mainly connected with families owning large plots of land; and such families assumed the responsibility and obligation for receiving guests from outside the village, providing hospitality for 178 687 648

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [751]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846
'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were [783]
not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly [862]
prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. [776]
Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the 553
end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important [780]
feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikh), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. [755]
It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story [782]
of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest, 782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–50.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554 and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562 sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844] ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431] those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851] wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one, or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [782] 'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of 'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar- riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584] marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma. Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562 arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593 is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583] when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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872 794 more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

[539] [782]

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' [576] will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field.

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran.

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab.

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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159 and asked them to go away. But when the man was out of sight, the two boys returned to resume their fight. When one of them started to cry, the other fled, for if he waited, the father of the former boy would have caught him and struck him.

5. When the older boy found the ball with his brother, he snatched it from him; the younger boy started to cry. When the mother asked the older boy to give it back to his brother, he did. But when the mother went out, the older boy took the ball again and ran outside the house with it, looking proud and happy. The other boys asked him to show it to them and play together with it. When he returned home his mother spat in his face for taking the ball from his brother. He said that he did not take it, but it was given to him by his brother, who did not want it any more. Then the mother told him that he was a liar and asked him to hand the ball back to his brother.
6. When the two boys talked secretly, one of them warned the other against their enemy. They decided not to talk or sit with him or show him anything they had.
7. He screamed, saying that he felt some people trampling over him, and on asking them who they were, they refused to answer him. Then he shouted to be rescued: 'Oh, the One (Yawahid)' (a way of imploring God when in a state of distress, or when frightened, especially used in the village to summon other people for help, who on hearing such a cry, would immediately go to see what had happened).
8. He prayed for gold, clothes, shoes and socks.
9. He wants to grow up to farm and grow corn and go to Cairo. He also wants to get married. He does not want to become an old man with a bent back who is going to die.

C. *Age fourteen:*

1. The boy is angry because the other boys do not play with him.
2. He cursed his father and mother and thus made them angry. They thrashed him, and when he cried they sent him outside the house 'for the dogs to eat him'.
3. When the boy broke the jars, he was never sent again to fetch water, and his sister had to do it instead.
4. He interfered between the two boys, gave each a slap on the face and cursed their fathers.
5. The older boy took the ball from his younger brother to play with it himself. The father came and thrashed the older boy and rebuked him for being jealous of his younger brother.
6. He showed the other boy a place where gold was hidden. After collecting the gold, they sold it and with the money bought clothes, cars and bicycles.
7. He was afraid that they might be thieves who would beat him,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

A mosque is to be found in every village and in many places there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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[521] [852] believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the [182] poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I [465] believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the [189] house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

[852] [761] The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

[527] [851] [537] The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a considerable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of [554] honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayûm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [118] F [761]

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. F 852 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *henna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarras*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barûkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
778 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
769 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
715 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [192] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [150]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 156, and Fig. 157.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 785 this is not done the *rūḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fkīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *'afrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *'afrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳiyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them 783 bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred 793 to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their 793 services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, [465] would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

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Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

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FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

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FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

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[Text continues on p. 180]

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Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

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This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

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FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

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A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F 755 787 776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

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In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

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E 754 791 787 magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

F 754 789 782 776 The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

E [777] After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

F 789 The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

F 754 If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

F [777] [1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

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This time the sheikh said, "I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable."

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift).

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look.

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had

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787 done so, but that he had dropped it inside his trunk. He went back to the school, searched his trunk carefully, and found the key, as the man had told him he would.

● 787 787 The *zār* is not necessarily followed by the ceremony called the *ṣulḥeh*; this takes place when a sheikh has troubled a man or woman for some time, and at last becomes appeased. It is a form of peace-making between the sheikh and the person he possesses. If anyone is possessed by more than one sheikh it is not necessary to kill more than one sheep at the *ṣulḥeh*; one victim appeases them all.

[301]

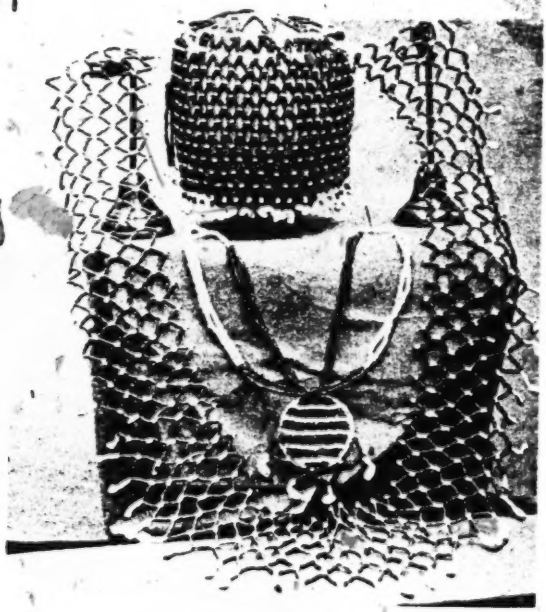

FIG. 120. ORNAMENTS—BELT, PENDANT, AND CAP—SOMETIMES WORN BY A WOMAN AT A ZĀR
The beads are green and white.

This belief, that it is possible to be thus possessed by a sheikh, is a very baneful one. The women who suppose themselves to be thus affected become exceedingly hysterical, and their husbands, for fear of the consequences, are put to great expense. The officials are quite rightly trying to put an end to the holding of the *zār*, but to suppress this ceremony completely will be difficult, as the beliefs associated with it are so deeply rooted in the peasants' minds.

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757 to detect any trickery. A friend of mine told me that he had been equally puzzled. I should mention that as he rubbed the child's eyes he repeated the *Fātiḥeh*, the first chapter of the Ḳorān.

755 Huskiness is supposed to be cured by the following curious performance. A boy who is well known to me was suffering from extreme huskiness of the voice. His relatives, finding that he got no better, sent for one of the village butchers. The boy was made

[297]

FIG. 126. THE 'EYE-DOCTOR' REMOVING GRUBS FROM A CHILD'S EYES

to lie down on a blanket spread on the ground, and the butcher pretended to cut his throat, placing the blunt edge of the knife against it, and saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," as he did so (Fig. 127). These words are also pronounced when an animal or even a fowl is killed for food. The relatives and friends present must be very careful not to repeat these words themselves, or the supposed cure would be useless. I saw the boy three or four days later, and remarked that he did not seem much better. His elder brother said it was because the butcher employed was too young. There was, however, a much older man who was very successful in effecting cures in this way, but he had not been available at the time.

[759] [252]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
781 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say " *Dastūr* " (" Permission ") or " *Dastūr yā mubārakīn* " (" Permission, O blessed ones "), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 372 782

F [791] [291]

FIG. 135 A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F E 26A 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say " In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say " In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

E [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776 F

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. E 342 464 F E 842 755 E

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. E 782 756 [152] E

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. E 782 776 755 E

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many 513 776

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 782 342 241 312 776

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

F 165 622 312

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

F [291] [152]

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

F 782 776

C 625

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building. 778 775 762

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

[792] [291]

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass 778 782

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 787
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be 842
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [269]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to 792
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 782
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 775
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 577
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 797 776 Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

C 766 346 A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

E 778 776 782 Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

E 778 346 [37] E [464] E 776 781 Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E 783

the shoes to the original owner. The shoes must always be those of a very poor *fellāḥ* who is in wretched circumstances, thus indicating the attitude of mind of the penitent man in the presence of the saint or sheikh whom he has wronged.

E 782-793

With regard to the offering of wax, it may be of interest to explain that the candles used in religious ceremonies in the Coptic church are always made by the priest himself or else by the servant who is responsible for the cleaning of the church.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the
[782] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful
[794] on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[764]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son
[782] recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿĪd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-ʿId eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*. 796 769

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before 796 789

[29] [231] [782]

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

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in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

FA 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

FA 515 264 782

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

FA 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

FA 844

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

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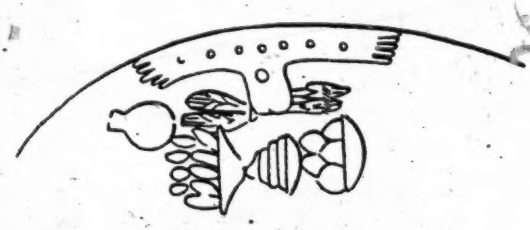
F A 431 465 241

second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]



A [789 778 532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥekat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏf*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

A [789 778 532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

A F 789 782

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

A [113]

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

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corn *'arūseh*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *'afārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkere'senb is shown making food-offerings

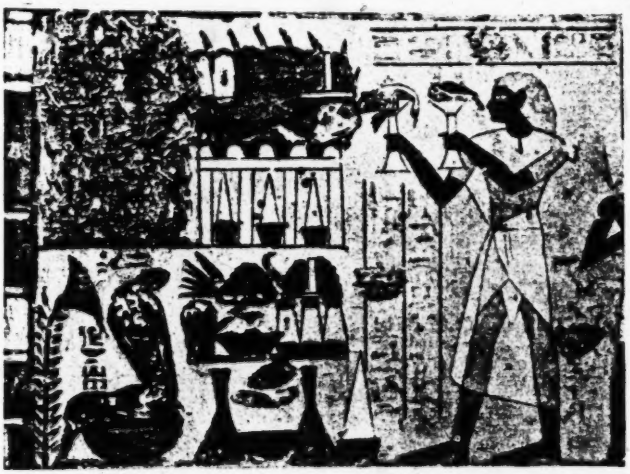

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Kha'emḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F A 789 789

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

000

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

A [113]

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully ?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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F 361 they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town, as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the *'ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F 511 184 The standard of living is practically invariable everywhere, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.

Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F 361 346 In Europe it is often said that the church building gives its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C F 779 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F 779 771 The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F ●782 796 516 Of their belief in God something will be said later on. Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*, they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([20]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

563 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (**).

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
437 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawâga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

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APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F 292 505 C F 152 302 887

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F 782 C F 265 443 764

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

755 some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance
756 arising from girls not being educated.
756 [Description of the *Zār*.]

" First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the
755 middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the
757 house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a
757 cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock
757 on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood
[184] is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig.
[534] When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an
[292] *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *tarbūsh* crowned with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandara*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78.] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

"Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

832 789 789 [307] [297] [276] The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says:

[539] [276]

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying:

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife]; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

832 with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the
782 charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the
789 commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

787 [p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters
789 in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the
121 *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium ("influencer") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the "enchanter" to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief,
[754] since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

791 As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employ-
780 ment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But "in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalq

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[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer. [535]

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's body, heart and brain. [755] [782]

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Saghārid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [804] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who
can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour
the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to
fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who
hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you
King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all
your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their former place was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

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Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

2.

Trust in Allah.

539 *Ya ʿēni, wel-miʿēn Alla*
wes-Seiyide u-rigāl Alla;
we-ramēt el-ḥiml ʿalēk, yalla.

Thou, mine eye, Allah is the helper
And the Lady and the men of Allah;
And on thee have I cast the burden, O Allah!

[192] 1. "Mine eye" is a frequent term of affection, equivalent to "my darling". Here, perhaps, the father is speaking to the son.

2. The "Lady" is the lady Zēnab, the Prophet's grand-daughter, whose greatly esteemed mosque lies in south Cairo. [192] The "men of Allah" are the saints (shêkhs), whose graves lie scattered throughout the land.

3.

Exhortation to Prayer.

[182] *Ya ʾalbi, ṣalli wimdaḥ Moḥammed*
illi ṣalāto manaʿit guhannim.

Pray, my heart, and praise Moḥammed,
Whose prayer has put away hell.

2. From pious Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

4.

Sing ye to the Prophet!

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782

The children exhort each other, even when at work on the excavations in the desert, not to forget Moḥammed, the messenger of Allaḥ, the intercessor for mankind, but to praise him with songs, such as our numbers 5—7. (Maḥmûd called such a song "ṛuna nabawi"). Otherwise, neglect of this, brings a most terrible revenge upon the entire family.

The refrain "O Moḥammed" is sometimes used as a mere interjection, for the sake of meter; again it is a part of the sentence.

Ya-Mḥammed,
ya wallāhi, ya-Mḥammed,
yabn-er-Rāma, ya-Mḥammed,
ya medallil bil-ṛamāme, ya-Mḥammed!
5 *Lāli lāli ya-Mḥammed*
fil-gabāli, ya-Mḥammed;
wil-lelētu ya-Mḥammed,
ruḥtu u-gētu, ya-Mḥammed;
welli ma ye'ūl ya-Mḥammed,
10 *yiṣbaḥ ma'tūl, ya-Mḥammed,*
fi dire-l-fūl, ya-Mḥammed,
hūwa we-ummo wimrāt 'ammo, ya-Mḥammed!

O Moḥammed,
By Allah, O Moḥammed,
Son of Rāma, O Moḥammed,
Who was shaded by the cloud, O Moḥammed!
5 Sing, sing: "O Moḥammed!"
In the desert! [— O Moḥammed].

[P.4 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmîye (thieves) and 'afârît (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullê ḫarâbe welina fîha 'afrît, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight than with us. Moreover, Abu Gûrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

[192] [776] [362] [172]

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

[241] [262]

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

5.

539x
782

Prayer to the Prophet.

Ya nabīne, ya sākin Ṭēbe,
u-ʿalēk, ya nabīne, u-ṣallēne.
Yōm el-ʾiyāme iššfaʿ fīne,
wiššaffaʿ, ya rasūl Alla,
5 *nuṣṣ el-layāli we-ḥakam Alla.*

O our Prophet, who dwellest in Ṭēbe,
For thee, O our Prophet, we entreat Allah's blessing.
At the Day of Resurrection speak for us,
And mediate for us, thou messenger of Allah,
5 At midnight — but Allah's will be done.

1. Ṭēbe is another name for the city of Medīna, in which the Prophet Moḥammed lies buried. [778]

2. That is: "we say: Allah bless Moḥammed and save him".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

6.

×539
782

Praise of the Prophet.

This song was a special favorite of our boys and was often sung:

"All nature, animate and inanimate, rendered its homage to the Prophet." Evidently Maḥmûd understood the song not solely as something that happened in time long past, when the Prophet still walked on earth. He wished the camel, mentioned in l. 5, to be understood as the one which carries the Maḥmal[1] each year from Cairo to Mecca and back. This interpretation certainly is false and artificial, but it indicates, that Maḥmûd thought not only of the distant past: each nod
[824] of the wind-bowed palms and the opening of every rosebud is, even to this day, a greeting for the Prophet.

Ya 'eni, weṣ-ṣala 'an-nabi,
we-ṣalāt en-nabi maksabi.
Mitwaḥḥid rabbak, ya ṣabi.
Wen-naḫle sagadit lin-nabi,
5 *wel-gamal ḥām lin-nabi,*
wil-ḥagar lān lin-nabi,
wil-ward fattaḥ lin-nabi,
wel-ḥaṣa sabbaḥ le-rabbo:
kullo kerāme lin-nabi.

Thou, mine eye, Allah's blessing be upon the Prophet!
And the prayer of the Prophet shall be my gain.
Thy Lord is an only one — O boy.
The palm-tree bowed before the Prophet,
5 And the camel ran about searching for the Prophet,

[1]) Regarding Maḥmal see Lane II p. 182.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

And the stone was soft for the Prophet,
And the roses unfolded for the Prophet,
And the pebbles praised God, their Lord:
"All in honor of the Prophet"!

1. "Mine eye" = "My darling"; compare No. 2. Here it is resumed by "boy" in l. 2.

2. The Prophet is the intercessor of man before God, and as such rewards the pious who invoke God's blessing upon him. Compare the same line of thought in No. 3.

3. "The Lord thy God is one God."

4. The pebbles which cover the surface of the desert say: subḥān Allāh, "(I praise) the perfection of God."

7.

The Prophet in the Rose-Garden.

Moḥammed dāḫil eg-genēne
wel-wardē ḍallil ʿalê.
Be-ṭarfē šālo el-ʾaṣab,
farado we-ṣalla ʿalê.

Moḥammed entered the garden,
And the roses shaded him.
The edge of his shawl was embroidered in gold.
He spread it and prayed upon it.

2. A love-song of Upper Egypt (Qene?), of which Klunzinger (p. 110) gives a translation, begins thus: "I entered the garden and the roses shaded me".

3. The shawl, which is worn wound about the head, as a turban, often serves as a prayer-rug. No Moslem at prayer, would touch the bare earth. He prays upon a little rug, designed for the purpose; upon his cloak, or, as in this case, upon the shawl of his turban.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sick with Longing.

90.

539x
832

Ya ma inte wāḥišni,
ya gamīl, we-rāḥi fīk!
Ya me'anis 'albi, le-mīn aškīk?
aškīk lilli 'adir, 'adir yihdīk
5 *we-yballiṛ eṣ-ṣabir amalo.*
Ana ḥali le-bu'dak lam yirḍīk.

Oh, how lonely thou makest me,
Lovely one, while my spirit is with thee!
O companion of my heart, to whom shall I complain of thee?
I will complain of thee to the Mighty One, — [782] ●
mighty to guide thee
5 And make the patient one attain (the goal of) his hope.
It will not please thee (when thou seest) what is my state because of thine absence.

4. Of course God; compare No. 87, l. 2. He, alone, has power, so to guide the girl, that she may finally listen to her lover. [776]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

122.

Capricious Love.

539x
932

Yabiaḍ, ya ḥilu-l-'awām,
yalli 'ala ṣudrak rummān,
kam aṣlaḥak winte ṛaḍbān!
Ṭalet 'alēna-l-layāli!

Thou white one with the sweet form,
Thou, on whose breast pomegranates lie,
How many, "Allah restore thee", it costs me when thou art angry!
The nights have been too long for us!

3. Aṣlaḥak Allâ (May Allah restore thee) is a much used, [782] ejaculatory prayer.
4. During which we have been far from each other.

126.

Recognized.

×539 832 A girl wishes to ingratiate herself with a certain well-to-do young man (ll. 1—2). He repels her, saying that she bears the name of her other lover plainly upon her lips.

Massīk bil-ḫēr, ya-Mḥammed melā'ini,
rākib kuḥēle u-rāḥ el-kummê sittīnî.
Dā'i'a 'ala šiffetak ḥandar
u-'Osmān Bē! 'Iš' el-banāt ṛandara!
5 *Ya rabb, neggīni.*

"Good evening, Moḥammed, who meetest me
[292] Riding a noble mare, and trailing the sleeve yards long."
"[O be gone!] Tatooed in green on thy lips is
The name Osman Bê! — — How fickle are girls when in love!
5 O Lord, save me [from all danger]!"

2. The last words mean literally: trailing the sleeve sixty (yards) long, a great exaggeration.

3. Literally: "Thou hast green color tatooed and the [304] name etc." Regarding tatooing see No. 64. Girls often have the name of a lover tatooed upon themselves. Compare a song from Endor in Galilee, in Dalman's collection, p. 112. "... the hands a work of the Creator and the blue tatooing over them strewn. On her breast she writes Ḥ and M and D." (These letters stand for Ḥ(a)m(a)d, the name of the lover.)

5. This exclamation has no connection with what precedes, [782] as it would seem from the English. It is one of the innumerable, ejaculatory prayers, which Moslems enjoy repeating.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
512 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
264 breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
[272] before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[276] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from
[265] the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour
[521] free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[789] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey). 512 [782] [264]

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance. 512 513 [783] [782] [264] 512 461 [782]

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West. 461 [241]

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body 515
and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public [368]
baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed 574
of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if 562
possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half 517
a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the [276]
latter being less in use among the women than among the [274]
men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and [533]
wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and [535]
dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry —in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the [351]
open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the 562
burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocri- [182]
tical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; [171]
indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his 512
boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife [264]
again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta [513]
in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable [562]
woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
776 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast
[178] of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

796 [178] [535] [186] [272] [943] [787]

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their darling to be visible to a distance.

526 796 [492]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
846 *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorâk*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [051]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins,
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 846 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation [783] from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly [062] prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her.

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. [776] Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him.

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the 553 end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important [780] feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven [755] times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story [782] of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that
still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she 846
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have
elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded
throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [176]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's [800]
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told
him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father
has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [783] ●
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 431
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or
distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the
child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money
and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal
grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat
before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child,
accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some
elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new
scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding
his mother's or father's old wrappings. 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 842
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of
the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their [581]
father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant,
Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the
"Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by
their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in
this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace
and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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852 occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute
867 between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange
[593] of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose
[826] foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such
[776] children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is
852 the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem
779 world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

852 The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circum-
cision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them
[779] as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For
● [983] the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Haq Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'. 519

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity. 857* [867] [883]

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'. 783 519

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes. 857* [526]

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[988] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[909] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
[744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[153] [1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the New Testament.

[983] [2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and purity.

[3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee,
[900] those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being ; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
779 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children ; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789 who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
779 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E 765 152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *'arīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F C 776 688

of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

F C 776 783

Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

F C 783

It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *ḳibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

F C [783]

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

COPTIC SAINTS

E 783

the shoes to the original owner. The shoes must always be those of a very poor *fellāḥ* who is in wretched circumstances, thus indicating the attitude of mind of the penitent man in the presence of the saint or sheikh whom he has wronged.

E 782 793

With regard to the offering of wax, it may be of interest to explain that the candles used in religious ceremonies in the Coptic church are always made by the priest himself or else by the servant who is responsible for the cleaning of the church.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

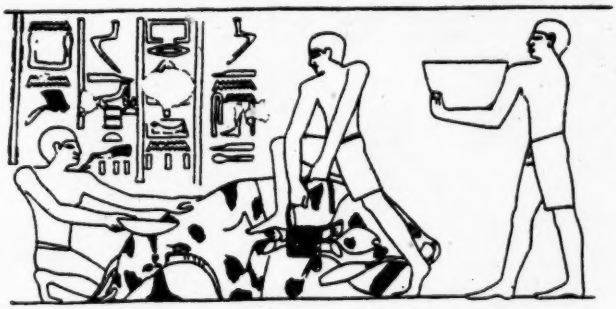

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

776 855 693 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say," God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suĕf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[84] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[702] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [188] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday fol- [262] lowing people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash themselves with [illegible]*gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday 783 has become "pe[illegible]hursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth 846 852 into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his 553 mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only 551 personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This [178] custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among [582] themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with 846 the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured 852 over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is [801] a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and [783] mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or 527 a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and [524] other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a [779]

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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 587 [584] [145]

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CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

512 In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the
513 towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before
[783] sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions
[782] enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To
[779] say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial
512 to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his
264 pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His
[272] breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes
276 before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous
[265] evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed
[262] beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes,
512 works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet,
461 and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be
[539] to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour
[521] free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire
[574] to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the
512 other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn
[539] up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is
[621] but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted
[782] neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey). 512 [782] [264]

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance. 512 513 [783] [782] [264] 512 461 [782]

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West. 461 [241]

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

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562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[517] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harîm* (singular *harme; hârem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[171] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essak Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
789 necks of the hapless infants.
755

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en-
[449] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[784] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet.

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *koḥl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikḥaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes.

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache!

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them.

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads.

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharḳiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

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boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear. C 625 C 776 625 C [788]

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it. F 776 782

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured. F 776 828 784 685 C 828 513 782 755

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear. F 789

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must F [774] 775 825

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

THE "CURE" FOR ITCH AND DRY SCAB

AMONG the severest of the diseases that afflict mankind is skin-disease (or eczema) with its different varieties, either moist or dry. The "cure" for the dry variety among the "old wives" is to clothe the afflicted one in a garment of pure silk. 164 755

A very trustworthy person has related that he had not omitted to use everything prescribed by modern medicine, but without success. So he employed the silk garment and his ailment passed completely away. Indeed the prescription of the "old wife" agrees with what is set down in Canon Law regarding prohibiting men from wearing pure silk except in the case of itch.[1] [784]

XII

THE "CURE" FOR PROTUBERANT TUMOURS

THE "old wives" do not stick at any of the diseases unless it is outside the sphere of trickery to affect its "cure." They do not trouble whether by the process of imagination, either through the power of the Jinn, or the development of thought, a "cure" will result. So beware of a very valuable "cure" for tumours which appear on the skin. 755

The patient seeks out a hen, free from blemish, without a single white feather, and watches her until she lays an egg in a place unreached [p. 25] by the rays of the sun. Then he brings lentils to her with their seeds to all appearance the same in number as the tumours on his body. After he has emptied

[1] [For the references to the prohibition of silken garments, see A. J. Wensinck: *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, Leiden, 1927, p. 45 f. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

APPENDIX II

1796 The following is the lunar calendar and the main religious events connected with it.

Lunar Months	*Religious Events*
Muharram	First day of the month is celebrated as the beginning of the new year. Tenth occasions a 'Rahmat' meal on ' 'Ashoura'.[1]
Safar	—
Rabi Awwal	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday on the 12th.
Rabi Tani	—
Jamad Awwal	—
Jamad Tani	—
Rajab	A 'Rahmat' meal to commemorate the Prophet's journey from Medina to Jerusalem 'Israi' on 27th.
Shaaban	Meal and prayers on the 14th.
[1985] Ramadan	The month of fasting.
Shawwal	On its first day is the breaking of the fast and the celebration of 'Id Ramadan, first feast.
[1988] Zul Ka'dda	Preparation for pilgrimage.
Zul Hijjah	'Rhamat' meal on the 9th day called 'Arafat'. Tenth celebration of the Great Feast ('Id al Adha).

[1] Ashoura is a Shiite event of lamentation and blood sacrifice to commemorate the death of Hussain. In spite of the fact that the villagers are Sunnis (Malikites) they have a special meal to invoke God's mercy on their departed.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[P.259]

Appendix Five

THE WOMAN WHO SPEAKS IN KORANIC QUOTATIONS[7A]

ABDULLAH IBN AL-MUBARAK relates: 'I intended to perform my pilgrimage one year, so I joined the caravan that was going to Mecca. On the way I overslept one night, only to find on my awaking that the caravan had left. While pursuing the caravan, I found a woman who had also lost her way. On my enquiring her name, she answered, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—and mention Mary in the Book".[1] So I knew that her name was Mary (Mariam). I offered her food, but she refused, saying, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God".[2] As I understood that she was fasting, I recited to her, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days".[3] To this she replied, "In the name of God . . . and that you fast is better for you if you know". Then I asked her whether she wanted to ride on my camel, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . and whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the Garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly".[4] So I knew she wanted to ride, so I made the camel kneel for her to mount, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . say to the believing men that they cast down their looks, and guard their private parts: that is pure for them: surely Allah is aware of what they do".[5] Immediately I knew that she desired me to be modest, so I turned away my face while she mounted. While I was urging the camel to get up, she quoted, "In the name of God . . . Glory to Him who made this subservient to us, and we were not able to do it".[6] On the way I asked her whether she had any children and her answer was, "In the name of God . . . and mention Abraham in the Book: surely he was a truthful man, a Prophet".[7] "O John (Yahya), take

788 539 [785]

[1] Koran, xix, 16.
[2] Koran, ii, 184.
[3] Koran, xxiv, 30.
[4] Koran, xix, 26.
[5] Koran, iv, 124.
[6] Koran, xliii, 13.
[7] Koran, xix, 41.

7A [For commentary on this story, see category 116, p.173-Qualyas]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-'Īd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *mazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawâga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
812 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

113 78. 'Aly Shamsy Pasha, Speech in the Chamber, December 1939.

79. A VILLAGE SUMMER SCHOOL, article in THE SOCIAL WORKERS' BULLETIN, May 1938.

80. 'Abdul-Halim Abu-Seif Radi, 7.4.1941.

81. Apostolic Letter to the Mexican Bishops, 28.3.1937; section on the peasantry.

785 796 527 82. The fasting month of Ramadan is succeeded by the month of Shawwal, the first three days of which are a great public holiday, the Lesser Bairam. About two months later comes the other great holiday, the four days of the Great Bairam.

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791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

796 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense.
789 They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the foot-prints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[805] [1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a
[796] sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast
[785] day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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Upper Egypt

FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed. 796

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices. 796 262 [621]

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month 796 [785]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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tion of Ramadan is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the province are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206] moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785 ● has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796 proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [207] the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[702] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street.
[735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

/85 cont'd/ 755
will then be divided between the Kūdiya, the members of the musical 782
band and the guests. After the patient has eaten the bread, the Kūdiya wraps the silver piece with blood on it, a piece of bread, salt, sugar and Bukhur into a white handkerchief and ties it round the patient's right upper arm. It must stay there for a week. This is called "El-'Aqd", which means pact or treaty, as explained above and signifies that the patient has executed her obligations towards the spirits who must, in turn, refrain from harming her.

/86/ In the evening the Kūdiya, members of the musical band and all guests will partake of the meat of the sacrificed animal. The bones are gathered carefully and buried in the earth.

About 9 P.M. the Kūdiya burns bukhur and fumigates the pa- 755
tient's face, armpits, legs and clothes. Any other woman of the assembly can also be fumigated by the Kūdiya for money. While fumigating the Kūdiya recites something, thereby calling the spirit for whose benefit the Zar is performed, and requests the guest to recite the "opening of the Quoran." She will ask the spirit's pardon and request them not to harm the patient's body, heart and head. (14)

Then the patient wears special clothes as required by her master 755
(the spirit in possession of her), when she enters the hall the music 786 ●
tunes in slow rhythm, controlled by the beats of drums and big frame 533
drums. Then the dancer of the band begins his task. He dances in 535
front of the patient and by his glances and movements of body and eyes charms her until she stands up and dances too. He never lets her escape from his magical or magnetical control, lets the dance get more and more frenzied and makes her imitate him. In the same way the music becomes faster, the drums louder and the flutes higher until a barbaric primitive ecstasy dominates the gathering. The dancer looks round for victims who fall an easy prey to his power. He is helped in his endeavours by drummers and frame-drummers

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(14) For full details of the recitations see "Folklore" in Arabic by A.R. Saleh. Cairo/2nd edition, 1955, p. 120

/86 cont'd/ 755
who beat their instruments over the head of the victim until she 786
loses her last restraint and also joins the hysterical group and even- 533
tually falls down totally exhausted. But still the demonic dancer 535
goes round looking for new victims until there is no one left who can still dance. The music fades away and in one quarter of an hour the place is silent again. When a lady is exhausted and about to fall down, she is immediately helped by one of the assistants who hurries to lay her down, presses her head and says: "I swear to you King of the earth to forgive this patient and am ready to fulfill all your demands." The women who had been dancing utter some [198]
strange words in the Zar language which will be discussed later.

After a short interval music and dancing will start again with each band playing for about one hour. The women change into the clothes demanded by every individual spirit. This will go on until midnight or 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Six days later the Kūdiya again goes to the patient's house. In 755
the afternoon she prepares a small kursi with sour milk and different 782
kinds of sweets. Candles are lit until bed-time. Bukhur is prepared the next day and the Kūdiya unties the handkerchief. During the following year a goat or sheep must be sacrificed.

/87/ Conclusions:

1. The word: Etymologically the word Zar seems to be derived 755
from the Arabic "Zara" = or "Ziyara" = a visit. It is probably 776
an Arabic loan-word derived from the ancient Agao religion [192]
of the Pagan Kushites of Abyssinia, whose sky-god was called "Zar." This word is also used by the Christian Abyssinians to denote evil spirits.

Dr. Cerulli tells us that in Abyssinia the worship of the gods [171]
of the Kushitic tribes was continued by the conquerors who only later in history brought about some changes. These gods became minor deities or nature spirits, while their *former place* was occupied by the gods of the conquerors; thus it happened that

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

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779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [793] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

● 786 796 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*munshed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

"She (the loved one) has made me a cap
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and [788] filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle over her body on her return.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Eleven

A NOTE ON SOME DREAMS COLLECTED IN THE VILLAGE

DREAMS are considered to be of value as a means of obtaining useful ethnological material, and thus could serve purposes similar to those of tests. The significance of dreams is hence relevant data for our study. It must be pointed out here that the writer was not fully aware of the inportance of such data while he was in the field, and for this reason he did not collect enough dreams, and the ones recorded here are all those collected, without any selection.

In Silwa, women are reputed to be more capable of dreaming than men; they are also known to be better interpreters. Boys and girls do not communicate their dreams either to their parents or to other boys and girls. It was a great surprise for them to be asked to recollect dreams, and much effort was required by them to recall them.

It is believed that dreams are inspired by angels, or at least they are caused by some vaguely defined supernatural forces. The importance of dreams, especially as a means of forecasting future happenings, receives its religious justification from the story of the Prophet Joseph related in the Koran showing his infallible insight in interpreting dreams. At least, among men in the village, it is believed that the dreams of a person who sleeps ritually clean are truer than those of one who is not in the same state.

As in Tikopia, the weight attached to a dream varies according to the intensity of the personal situation at the time; a dream receives more credence in so far as it can be related to some question immediately at issue.[1] When a person is in a critical situation, e.g. financial difficulty, absence of a son, expecting decision in a law suit, or in the case of a pregnant woman, he or she does not only pay considerable attention to dreams, but asks relatives and friends to dream for him or her. On their part, such relatives and friends volunteer to tell such a person about dreams in which he or she may appear.

There is a certain formal technique of interpreting dreams, especially amongst women, which the writer did not investigate. The narration of

[1] Raymond Firth, 'The Meaning of Dreams in Tikopia', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934, p. 63.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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my beating he fled. (This young man told me that he found this dream difficult to interpret, so he related it to a person who is known to be good in interpreting dreams. The latter told him that the camel was his 'karina'; and everybody has a 'karina' that follows him in his life and causes him a lot of trouble and needs to be propitiated.) 159 [787]

Age twenty-two, just married and had a newly-born girl:[1]

I dreamt that my wife was pregnant, and she brought forth a boy. When I consulted my father about naming him, he insisted on calling him by the name 'Mostafa'[2] but I wanted to give him another name, and there was disagreement between my father and me. (The man connected this dream with the fact that later on his wife brought forth a girl whom he called Zainab, and that his father fell ill.) [787]

Age forty-five:

I dreamt that I was transformed into a 'green sparrow', and that on the Night of Kadr (the night of the 27th of Ramadan)[3] I entered Paradise where I stayed for seven years. Overwhelmed by the vastness of Paradise I enquired whether there was an end to it, and I was told that it had no end, and that there was neither sun nor moon; there one suffers neither heat nor cold; people sleep on couches; there are palaces the like of which have never been built on earth, fruits that have never been grown on this planet. While I was told all this, two people were holding me, one by the right arm, and the other by the left. But all of a sudden, a man came from behind me and pushed me out of Paradise saying, 'You don't deserve it yet'. (He commented that after this God helped him to perform his pilgrimage.) [787]

Age forty approximately:

Once I dreamt that Ahmad (the wealthiest village shopkeeper) was climbing a palm tree, and suddenly fell to the ground. People gathered round him and tried to revive him with 'the smell of onions and garlic'. When he recovered he said, 'I have fallen from above. But I am safe, thanks to God.'

WOMEN'S DREAMS

Age forty-five:

One day I went to the well adjacent to our clan's guest house, and found at the entrance of the guest house the man who draws the water from the well. Inside the guest house there were plants growing, such as clover and sugar cane. The man asked me to enter the guest house 'to see my father's farm'(?) When I entered I found that the northern section of the guest

[1] This dream was just before his wife gave birth to the baby.

[2] This is also the baby's grandfather's name.

[3] According to Moslem belief, the Prophet invisibly during this night made a journey from Mecca to Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. It is believed by the villagers that there is a certain unknown hour on this night, during which prayers are always answered.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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159 house was dark with two empty water jars, while the southern side was lit and with two full water jars. I asked the man the reason for this. He told me that I was not permitted to ask such questions, but merely to look around. Then I asked him to give me some clover for my sheep as this was my father's land. He said that he could not give me anything as he was only a guardian. Then he took my water jar which I had filled and placed it in the guest house, saying, 'This water jar should not enter your house'.

Age seventy-five:

I dreamt that my father was sitting talking with 'Hag abu-Ghannam' (a pious man). The pious man's face looked dark (lit. smoky) while my father's face was bright and shining. Then the pious man asked me whether I was capable of going to see my relatives, who lived in another village, but my father said, 'No, she is not strong enough for that'.

Age thirty-five:

I dreamt that I was riding a donkey which on hearing the sound of a train threw me into the canal. In the water I found some grass tuft to which I clung. Then I discovered an iron rail leading to the bank on which I walked and so got out safely.

Age thirty-eight:

I dreamt that last year I went on pilgrimage, and saw the Prophet's tomb which has four doors, one in the east, one in the west, one in the north and one in the south. I entered the tomb from the west door while other people were looking through a window. On the north side of the Prophet's tomb there was a minaret. (The woman commented that when she told one of the pilgrims about this dream he confirmed these details, [178] and this meant that one day God would enable her to perform this religious obligation.)

Age thirty:

I was eating meat with another woman. While we were eating another girl came whom I did not know, and we gave her a portion of the meat, while we went on eating the rest. (The woman commented that meat in [179] the dream is a sign that something good may turn up unexpectedly.)

Age about forty:

One day a man came and presented me with a load of chaff and I was very pleased. (She commented that when she told her mother about it, the latter said that it might mean they would receive some money to buy [180] their ration of sugar and some clothes. After three days her husband, who works in Alexandria, sent her two pounds.)

Age thirty:

A woman neighbour was playing on the tambourine and singing with other women celebrating her son's circumcision ceremony. I filled my jar

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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with water to give to her as a help for the ceremony. While I was pouring 159
my jar into the water pot of her house, the women who were there started
singing for me. I was frightened. (She commented that the 'tambourine'
is an evil omen in the dream and indicates that something bad may [787]
happen.)

Age forty:

During the wedding ceremony of our neighbour a man gave me two
coins, one for myself and the other for another woman (X). X was greedy
and wanted to take the two coins. (She commented that the dream was [787]
realized, as next morning X's daughter brought forth a boy, and on the
evening of the same day, she gave birth to a son.)

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of which she would be the mistress. I have, however, no territory available for this purpose except the submerged land of el-Hun. It is in many respects favourably situated. It is a convenient distance from my capital. It is surrounded by desert. My daughter will thus be independent, and protected.'

" ' Quite true, great King,' responded Joseph, ' when would you wish it done ? For accomplished it shall be by the aid of Allah, the all-powerful.'

" ' The sooner the better,' said the King.

" Then Allah inspired Joseph with a plan. He directed him to make three canals ; one from Upper Egypt, a canal on the east, and a canal on the west. Joseph collected workmen and dug the canal of Menhi from Eshmunēn to el-Lahūn. Then he excavated the canal of el-Fayūm and the eastern canal, with another canal near it called Beni-Hamed to the west. In this way the water was drained from el-Hun ; then he set an army of labourers at work. They cut down the tamarisks and bushes which grew there and carried them away. At the season when the Nile begins to rise the marsh had been converted into good cultivable land. The Nile rose ; the water entered the mouth of the Menhi Canal and flowed down the Nile Valley to el-Lahūn ; thence it turned towards el-Fayūm and entered that canal in such volume that it filled it, and converted the land into a region irrigated by the Nile.

" King Raiyan thereupon came to see his new province with the courtiers who had advised him to set Joseph this task. When they saw the result they greatly marvelled at the skill and inventive genius of Joseph, and exclaimed : ' We do not know which most to admire, the draining of the marsh and the destruction of the noxious plants, or the conversion of its surface into fertile and well-watered fields.'

" Then the King said to Joseph : ' How long did it take you to bring this district into the excellent state in which I find it ? '

" ' Seventy days,' responded Joseph.

" Then Pharaoh turned to his courtiers and said : ' Apparently one could not have done it in a thousand days.'

" Thus the name was changed from el-Hun, or ' the Marsh,' to el-Fayūm, ' the land of a thousand days.' "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [882] 301

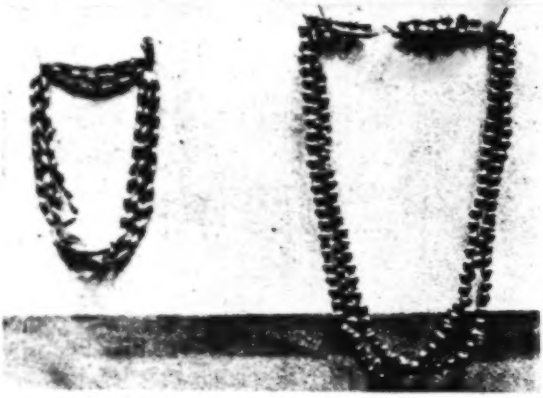

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 [789] [187]

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [594] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 716 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
779 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
779 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[415]

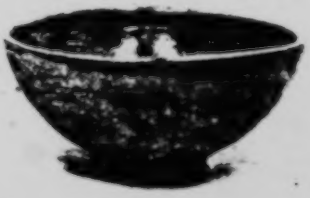

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
704 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
704 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
761 been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

776 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
704 widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
704 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or 776
female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the 774
ukht of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with 843
a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. 776
The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and 774
she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of [787] the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and [415] anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery [312] jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair [761] continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Karin and Karineh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[865] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
291 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

[463] In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

[291]
[285]

789 In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put
852 into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *kohl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

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443 drum (*darābukkeh*), etc., while at a short distance the tattooer may
534 be engaged in decorating the hand of some youth.[1]
[304] Various entertainers attend most of the larger markets, such as
443 a conjurer, a reciter of legends, musicians accompanied by a male
536 dancer, to say nothing of the fortune-teller, who, seated in a small
787 tent, usually attracts a considerable number of people. He makes
533 a series of holes in sand spread on a handkerchief upon the ground in front of him, and by certain methods of counting these deducts his conclusions. The conjurers are really very clever.

443 It will thus be seen that business on market-days is pleasantly
461 combined with pleasure.

Conversation is general and loud, sounding to the unaccustomed European ear like violent quarrelling.

443 When the warmer weather begins the traders erect rough booths,
132 looking like primitive umbrellas, under which they can take shelter
437 from the heat. Both time and patience are required to effect a purchase, for the seller of an article asks quite double the price he will accept. Arguing and gesticulating, the trader and would-be purchaser wrangle over the article until the price is adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties. Sometimes, if the trader is insistent, the would-be purchaser gets up from the ground and proceeds to walk away, whereupon the trader usually betrays a readiness to make further concession, and finally agrees to accept a lower price than that demanded.

443 In the hot season the water-carrier does good business, as heat,
[132] bargaining, and shouting make for thirst. He is usually paid not
[437] in money, so I was told, but by small presents of onions, tomatoes, or other delicacies.

I have observed that the people show praiseworthy consideration for the animals which they bring to the market. On their arrival
[231] one of the first things the men do is to provide their animals with fodder, and also water if such is obtainable. One year, when I was living in the fields near a village, the market was held close to my camp, and I particularly noticed this consideration for their beasts on the part of the peasants.

As the afternoon advances the traders begin to pack up the goods which have remained unpurchased, and those who have
[490] come from a distance load their baggage on their donkeys, and so depart to their several villages.

[1] See Chapter III.

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791 554 employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and [431] [754] other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791 756 776 787

[291]

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

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This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

[291]

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A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F 791 787 776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F 755 787 776

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

F C 791 778

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E 791 787 789

When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *ʿafrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

E [776]
E [776]
F C [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *'afrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *'afrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *'afrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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787 685 to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

[291] [342] [352]

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE KORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently [152] very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

754 There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. 754
If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually [761]
dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the 754
corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the 753
clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the [755]
figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times 754
in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in 191
many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some 776
people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being 787
among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also [152]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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787 786 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 787 755 787 [263] [789]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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● 789 done so, but that he had dropped it inside his trunk. He went back to the school, searched his trunk carefully, and found the key, as the man had told him he would.

782 789 The *zār* is not necessarily followed by the ceremony called the *ṣulḥeh*; this takes place when a sheikh has troubled a man or woman for some time, and at last becomes appeased. It is a form of peace-making between the sheikh and the person he possesses. If anyone is possessed by more than one sheikh it is not necessary to kill more than one sheep at the *ṣulḥeh*; one victim appeases them all.

[301]

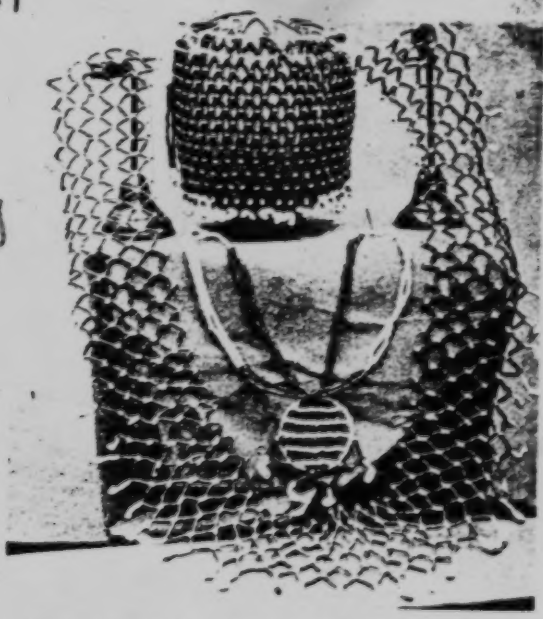

FIG. 120. ORNAMENTS—BELT, PENDANT, AND CAP—SOMETIMES WORN BY A WOMAN AT A ZĀR
The beads are green and white.

This belief, that it is possible to be thus possessed by a sheikh, is a very baneful one. The women who suppose themselves to be thus affected become exceedingly hysterical, and their husbands, for fear of the consequences, are put to great expense. The officials are quite rightly trying to put an end to the holding of the *zār*, but to suppress this ceremony completely will be difficult, as the beliefs associated with it are so deeply rooted in the peasants' minds.

[652]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak. F 114 750

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

755 753 F [278] [789]

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

F [751] F C 755 754

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

F 751 754 822 831

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left. When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*, speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *kulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *kulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *kulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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792 During the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [159] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that 'Abdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 788 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of ● 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sˁw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *ʿafrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-ʿAmarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

755 776 life out of him. As for the Moor, whenever he noticed any slackening or fatigue on the part of these two beaters, he encouraged them to keep on by saying, "The *jinnī* is about to depart. Your sick one will soon be healed by the expulsion of this cursed son of an unbeliever who rebels against the Faith."

Feelings of pity incited me to restrain the beaters from their work, but the patient's father reproached me, and told me not to interfere with what did not concern me. So I returned home, in wonderment at what I had seen.

X

"THE LODGER" (*NAZĪL*)

756 787 [539] 776

"Said an old hag, There has come to me
A *jinnī*, who stays with me as a "lodger,"
Come ye to him, and come again soon,
That he may cure your sick!"

A CERTAIN old hag will assert that a *jinnī* keeps her company, and is like a husband to her. He reveals to her knowledge of the unseen and informs her about all the medicaments that the sick require. There is one such who is famous, an old wife in the Province of Buḥaira, in the village of Ḳahūḳīya, and there is another in the village [p. 28] of Umm Ḥakīm. The former has surpassed the latter, because her *'afrīt* (whom she names Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed) is very pious. Women come to her from all directions, and bring her presents of money. (The money of course which is brought to the Shaikh, is called a *present*, not a *payment*). The procedure is, the "old wife" enters a darkened chamber, locks the door securely, and remains in it for a short time. Then she returns to her clients with some drugs, which she asserts her Shaiṭān (or devil) has requisitioned from remote districts and distant lands by means of his "assistants." She tells them to take these medicaments

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because the *Jinn* (lit. the "Helpers") have brought some of them from India, and others from Sind or from the land near to the mountains of Kāf,[1] and other such nonsense and absurdities, "*as to which Allah has sent down no authority.*"[2]

Sometimes certain of the women request her to allow them to enter the darkened chamber that they may participate in the "blessing" (*baraka*) of the *'Afrīt*, to enable them to obtain their ends. (For this she receives another "tip.") One of them thereupon enters the chamber which is pitch black. After a short time she hears either a weak voice, or a loud one which utters the name of her sick one, or her own name, if she be the patient, and explains to her the date of the illness which has afflicted her or her sick one. It assures her that its "helpers" have undergone great suffering and distress in the course of producing the beneficent antidote (or rather the maleficent poison) from the ends of the inhabited world, and that the invalid will be cured after a few days.

[p. 29.] The truth of the matter is that the ill-omened old hag has employed certain women (who consider themselves brokers or traffickers, and so on, and who have the entrée into every house) as her spies to bring her news of patients in every village and hamlet, and the date of their illness, in full detail, as for example, that no child of such a woman is living, and that so and so is barren, and so forth, according to their methods of deceit and their innumerable ways of stratagem and chicanery.

One of the duties of these women is to advise sick women or others to go to Shaikh Sīd Aḥmed, when such a scene as the one we have described takes place. There is nothing of course in the chamber of the so-called Shaikh except the old woman herself who has already become acquainted with what the spies have conveyed to her, and which she repeats, not in her own voice of course, to the sick woman, or to one of her relatives, who implicitly believes in the Shaikh, and impoverishes herself in order to propitiate him.

[1] [In Islamic cosmology the mountain range that surrounds the earth. Tr.]
[2] [Koran, xii, 40; liii, 23, etc. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

XI

FRATERNIZING WITH THE JINN

Some of these false sheikhs and scandalous tricksters claim that they possess charms or spells which they procure from the *Jinn*, whom they have under their jurisdiction. One such individual who gained the confidence of fools in the past, was a person whose domicile was in the city of Damanhûr.[1] Caravans used to go to him from all the villages. One of the people of my own village of Zemzem,[2] who had beheld this fellow and had actually seen [p. 30] his tricks, told me that he was once invited to this village. (His story was as follows): When he drew near we saw his servant behind him carrying a bag. So we asked him what it contained. He said it held clothes for his servant and himself which they needed to wrap themselves up in when they summoned the Jinn. His host was a man named Sarûr in whose house there had assembled a mixed crowd of men and women. The women he established in the upper part of the house on the roof. When a great part of the night had passed, the Shaikh extinguished the lamp, which was the only one in the dwelling that had been lighted. Then he motioned to those present to go away from the corner of the room in which he was sitting, because he pretended that the approach of the Jinn was at hand. Meanwhile he was making the audience imagine that he was busy changing his clothes, and that his servant was doing likewise. But the truth is that they were both busy extracting trumpets from their bag, along with similar instruments of deception and delusion, which they consider assist the imagination. When they had finished this, they then began beating a copper bell with great force so that it seemed to those present that the Jinn (lit. the "Helpers") were falling upon them from the ceiling, and issuing from the bowels of the earth, and coming forth from all directions accompanied by this prodigious clamour and tumult. The

[1] [A well-known town in the Delta, capital of the Buḥaira Province. Tr.]
[2] [In the Delingât district near Damanhûr. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

two men followed all this up with a blast on the trumpet to such a pitch of violence that the veins of their necks were almost torn asunder. This "operation" was to assist in confirming the false opinions in the minds of the onlookers. After this the Shaikh turned to the lord of the house, after he made him stand up, and said to him [p. 31] "Your guests and lodgers have come to-night, what have you provided for their hospitality?" Then the fool of a man apologized to him, saying, "Please be so good as to excuse me. I did not think that they would eat as we do." "Never mind," said the Shaikh, "there is no harm done." and he shouted as follows, "Oh, Dharbākh" (which is the name of a jinnī, one of his "helpers," as he asserted), "Come to me." At once a voice was heard answering him, "To hear is to obey! Oh, my lord I am here; command me to do what you wish." He then said to him, "Bring us here delicious, fine-smelling fruits." Thereupon the "helper" went off, and returned after a second, accompanying his steps with a mighty tumult and a monstrous din, which made all hearts palpitate with impatience and alarm. Then he placed many pomegranates before the false Shaikh, who said to him, "Whence do you bring these?", to which he replied, "From the garden of Munāshela" (which is a village about a mile distant from Zemzem). At this the audience was astonished at the agility of this painstaking messenger and his celerity in fulfilling desires. Then they all received what the Shaikh gave them of that fruitage, except one who lay upon his back roaring with laughter, because he was aware of the secret of what was in the bag. As soon as the Shaikh saw him do so, he said, "So you laugh at Al-Murāḳib, the Protector of the mountains of Upper Egypt, or at Al-Shammākh, who is the master of the complete deed and the fulfilled word, whose armies extend to the country of Yemen and to Hind and Sind. Oh, ye people, escape quickly lest the evil of his uproar may touch you and yours!"

Immediately the men began rushing and pressing together in the search for safety, dreading what he might impose upon the house in the matter of misfortunes or disasters because of that mocking laughter.

[p. 32.] But when the women (up above) perceived this,

they thought that the Jinn had killed one of the party, so they began shouting and weeping and bemoaning in a most heart-rending manner. It so happened that the fugitives wandered from the path, and their imaginings drove them into a sheep-fold, in which were the sheep belonging to one of the fellāḥīn. As soon as they entered this enclosure the sheep were scared because of them; but they thought that they were devils, and this groundless imagination was fixed in the minds of some of them to such an extent that they fell upon the ground motionless as if dead. Others began scurrying over the ground; and while the rest were scaling the walls, one of them turned behind him and saw two rams butting each other. He thought they were killing one of his companions who had fainted in the middle of the pen. So he cast himself from the top of the wall to get away from that revolting sight, and fell into a worse and more revolting state, namely, by smashing his legs and his hands.

As for the fraternizing Shaikh, he had taken the opportunity of the emptiness of the house, and he and his servant had stolen the ornaments and garments therein, before they both went outside, fuming and raging at the shamelessness of that person, the jeerer, who was deserving of the anger and displeasure of the Jinn.

Strange to relate when the mistress of the house on the following days perceived the loss of her jewels, she praised Allah, and thanked Him, that the Jinn had not taken anything else. "What would I and my children have done," she said, "if the Jinn had abducted me?" And such absurdities are still remembered and handed down by people who believe in their authenticity.

XII

[p. 33.] SAND DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-RAML)

Most of those engaged in this are Sudanese. One of them will seat himself in the middle of a road near the wall of a house,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(c.1890)

EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit

Facing p. 35.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

with a little yellow sand in front of him. To him resort the illiterate, lazy rabble that he may foretell to them their dark future and their unfortunate fate. He draws lines on the sand with his finger, after the patient has crossed his palm with silver (for they imagine that the veils of hidden tidings are not raised except after the payment of white money). Then he says to him, "You are a poor man. There is a tall, brown fellow" (hereupon he adds a description of him), "who speaks evil of you behind your back and seeks to accomplish your ruin"; or, "There is a girl who sadly weeps for you night and day"; or, "You are restless in your thoughts, and there is a knotty problem ahead of you which will, if Allah allows it, be solved." And in like manner he manufactures all kinds and varieties of stories and tales, and if it is in agreement with what circulates in his mind, then the enquirer will rise and kiss the hand of the fortune-teller in gratitude for his goodness since he has scattered from before his eyes the clouds of doubt, which hindered him from a knowledge of future events.

XIII

SHELL DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-WADA')

In this branch of pernicious beliefs the practitioners are Sudanese women. One of them seats herself, like her countryman, in the middle [p. 34] of the road with a collection in front of her of sea-shells, and fragments of minerals, green and red and black, each with a special name indicative of something that is passionately desired. Their clients are mostly women who had no education in their youth, and now that they have grown up have become submissive to the power of the imagination. One of them comes to the Sudanese hag and divulges to her her complaint of being jilted by her sweetheart, and his abandonment of her and his trifling with her; or, she describes to her the anger of her husband towards her and his driving her from his house; or, that she is barren, etc. Then when

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

the hag has drawn from her her desire, she takes hold of her shells with her hands and throws them on the ground, and answers her after this fashion: "The shells tell you that a handsome, upright young man is in love with you but his forsaking you is excusable because a young woman, named so and so, has written lovingly to him; but Allah will drive away all cares and troubles from your heart since your lover will come back after so many years, and so many months, and so many days"; or, perhaps she says to the next: "Your husband dislikes you because he loves your neighbour. This shell said so, look at it." Or else she says to the other one: "You will have a child but you must call him Shaikh so and so. When that happens you must give me a douceur," and so forth.

As for shell-divination and the drawing of lines upon sand, and the writing of amulets, and the fraternizing with the Jinn, we have described them in detail since they are among the maladies of society [p. 35] which lead many times to the destruction of souls. There is no cure more successful than putting the law on the track of such quacks who cure nothing but imaginary ills. It is incumbent upon Government officials, to repair the damage done, and parents ought to warn their children against having recourse to such charlatans.

XIV

BIBLIOMANCY (FATḤ AL-KITĀB)[1]

THE practitioners of this craft are Moors[2] and Sudanese.

[1] [Literally the *Opening of the Book*. Sometimes the Koran is the "Book" employed. A photographic illustration of such Koranic divination may be found in Miss Blackman's work (p. 196). But in this section the "Book" may be any copy of a Koran Commentary (such as *Baiḍāwī*, or Zamakhsharī, or a collection of Ḥadīth (Bukhārī), or more likely one of the multitudinous Magic Books on sale everywhere. Also "playing cards" are given this name in popular speech, and are, naturally, used in this way by fortune-tellers. Tr.]

[2] [There is a current proverb, *Al-Maghrabī kaddāb yiftaḥ al-kitāb*, the Moor is a liar who opens the Book. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigāb*.]

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a 798
certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did 789
not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence 791
to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not 787
confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets 791
in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl 753
suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother 164
went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throw- 756
ing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon 755
as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a Shaikh from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳīh. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 787
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 754
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
878 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḳ*, plural of *gōḳa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

some other of the saints. All this is the result of ignorance arising from girls not being educated.

[Description of the *Zār*.]

"First of all the *Kūdīya* arose and placed a chair in the middle of the room and made our hostess, the mistress of the house, sit on it. She next produced [p. 75] two hens and a cock. She tied the legs of the hens together, placed the cock on her head and the two hens on her shoulders, and began reciting the appointed rigmarole and declaiming verses, whilst the birds for fear of her were screaming and shrieking until the place shook, and all the ladies were stroking their faces and saying: 'Please, oh, Lords! Help, oh, people of Allah! Pity, oh, my Lords!' whilst she was reciting and holding in her hand the drum which is called the *bandīr* in the parlance of the *Ṣūfīs* [lit. the people of the way]. Then she began pounding upon it and uttering incantations after that fashion, until when she ceased she took down the cock and the hens, and went out to the courtyard of the house, and brought in a ram, one of the best, and ordered it to be slaughtered. When it was stabbed she brought forth a dish and caught the blood in it, and ordered the lady to drink some of that blood, and anoint her limbs with it, which she did. We were all looking at what might make one's flesh creep. For we know that blood is forbidden, as much as the dead, or the flesh of the pig. When they were finished with these shocking actions, they surrounded her, having drums, and cymbals (*ṣunūg*) in their hands, and brought her in with, I fancy, greater ceremony than she had at her wedding, smeared as she was with blood in place of the wedding ornaments, until she sat in front of the *Kūdīya* and her followers. All sat in their places, and the ladies who were invited also sat down. The assembly composed itself and coffee was brought in, and they rested for half an hour. Then they took up their drums and began beating furiously with bewildering incantation. Meanwhile the lady was kneeling in front of the drummers with her head upside down [p. 76] on the ground till one of them came with a bundle of clothes consisting of a change of men's clothing, namely, an *'abā'a* [or cloak] embroidered with gold and silver thread in the best style. They opened it and brought out a robe of

Indian silk, its ends wrought with silver, a *tarbūsh* crowned with pearls, and added to that a sword and dagger both covered with silver. She girt herself with the sword and took the dagger in her hand and bowed herself in the midst of that august assembly, the instruments playing the while. Then she trembled and said: 'Peace be upon you.' They said, 'Welcome. Who are you?' She replied, 'I am the Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām.' So they played for her in the mode usual for the Shaikh afore-mentioned.

"Then she danced a merry, pleasing dance, until when the round was finished, the leader arose and massaged her. With that the Shaikh went his way. Thereat his wife, whose name is Sitt Rukkaya, appeared and entered into the body of the woman, and said: 'Peace be upon you, ladies,' in a high tone with traces of affectation in it. Then she saluted the whole company, and demanded clothes and ornaments. They brought her seven changes of silk, each one a different colour, and each one embroidered with gold and silver thread, and upon every garment a piece of gauze (*burunguk*) of the same colour. They call it the head-veil (*Ṭarḥa*). It has old gold charms on its edges. They also presented her with gold or silver worked necklaces, bracelets, anklets, collars, armbands, and rings—much larger than the usual rings—and veils, and other things as well. Then they beat for her according to the seven modes, and with each mode she put on a different dress and variety of ornaments. And in the meantime there arose [p. 77] some of those, who had been invited, and danced with her. All their fine clothing was not inferior to what we have described; that of the beggar women (*faḳīrāt*) being of silver. If the value of what was in that place had been counted it would have exceeded seven hundred guineas in ornaments and jewels, etc.

"When they had finished that, the lady who was the wife of 'Abd al-Salām went off, after saying good-bye to the company. Then in came the little son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Salām, although in the bodily form of the woman. Then her circumstances altered and she returned to the state of childhood, and sat upon the ground playing like a child, and speaking like a child and lisping. But the artifice was evident. They played

for her the usual mode, and she was jumping about like a child until it was finished. Then the spirit went out of her to his mother. After him came in the slave whose name is Murgān[1] and began speaking in the jargon of slaves, and dancing according to his customary mode. He at length went away and the slave-woman, his spouse [the Sitt Rīḥāna], came in and adorned herself, and stood in the midst of the hall, and screamed in a frightsome manner, and said, 'I will not cook save with the silver spoon (*maghrifa*) nor will I content myself with other than the silver roller (*gandara*). And if you do not bring them to me, I will blind her and cast upon her a disease, and will not let her rise up from the earth.' Then all the ladies rose from every side and surrounded her, each one kissing her hands, and coaxing her to forgive them, which only made her more refractory and terrifying until the chief *Kūdīya* rose and made her agree to come again the following week.

[p. 78.] "At this point I asked one of the ladies at my side, 'What is this body that contains this family even to the slaves and handmaidens; and where were they formerly? And why were the man and his wife and child not present together, and the slaves standing to wait on them?' When the lady heard what I said, she stared at me in astonishment, and said, 'Be quiet, lest the Lords be angry. (Pardon, oh, my Lords!)' Then I said, 'I did not mean that. I only wanted information. Why does she not do like the rest and return whence she came?' She said, 'The devotee worked for them the necessary things except for this Lady Rīḥāna. She did nothing for her, so the latter is very angry. (Allah be praised, oh, my Lady Rīḥāna.)'

"Afterwards food was brought to which the mistress of the *Zār* very cordially and politely invited the guests, after which they all departed pleased and grateful."

"Healing" by means of the *Zār*[2] acquired some fame when

[1] [This is the celebrated servant of the Jinn. The name means "coral."]

[2] [The nearest analogy to it is the Black Mass in Christendom or perhaps Voodooism. For further information consult P. Kahle: *Zār-Beschwörungen in Egypten* (in *Der Islam*, 3, 1912, pp. 1–41; 189–190; 318); also the *Moslem World*, 1913, pp. 275–289. In 1931 at the Exhibition of Modern Art in Cairo, there was on view an interesting oil painting by an Egyptian lady artist depicting part of the Zār ceremony. Tr.]

at them an instant. A second later one of the bulls was choked and the plough broken. Then al-Sa'dāwī [this was his name] called to him, " Woe to you, O Jafīla ! Could you not find someone else to afflict to-day with the blade of your envy ? Off with you, for I will retaliate upon you." He did not postpone his threat long, for the fire of envy enraged him. In the evening he went to the enclosure of his fellow " craftsman," but did not find him there. Instead he found a bull which he stared at with his eyes. Instantly the bull fell down, and al-Sa'dāwī thereupon withdrew. When Jafīla arrived and his people told him about it, he asked them, " Was al-Sa'dāwī present ? " Consider these two fools !

And because of the prevalence of this matter in the provinces you can see many illnesses, even wide-spread fevers, ascribed to " Envy." To " cure " this the " old wife " betakes herself to charm the patient, and kindles a fire on which she throws pieces of *shabb* (one of the compounds of Alumina) and *fasūkh* (sweet-smelling pine-resin) or *jāwī*.[1] Then when the *shabb* melts upon the fire it evaporates and some of the vapours become polluted with its elements and assume various forms. The " old wife " says that they are the representation of a woman or a man, according to her fabrications. [A fuller account than this is given by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, chapter XI, page 257 (Everyman Edition). Tr.]

[p. 97.] (Cases in point). The " old wife " once fumigated a young man. When she had blown up the alum (*shabb*) she pointed to it as the image of a woman whose name she mentioned, and who was well-known in their village for " envy." Thereafter she took a pin and stabbed it into the image saying, " May God put out her eye ! "

By a strange happening the woman, noted for her envy, came to the young man (who was a physician) complaining of ophthalmia. Someone told her that the old " fumigating " wife had stabbed a pin in the eye of the image and mentioned her name. Then the silly woman imagined that the ophthalmia had only arisen because of that, and went off to raise her plaint. From her imaginings she created realities for which she began

[1] [i.e. benzoin. The more correct name is *lubān jāwī*, i.e. Javanese frankincense. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

L

"CURERS OF THE POOR AND DIVINERS OF TREASURES"

"For illness of the body, sometimes healing is to be hoped for,
But the illness of poverty is indeed difficult.
What is the thought of the ignorant when they lose
Their wits? When the quack roams about,
And says, Divination (*jafr*) tells me of treasure.
So the person who gives money will find happiness.
The glory of incense is nothing but a means
By which the artful fashions the impossible."

An Arabic proverb tells us: "In corners are hidden things" (*fī zawāyā khābāyā*). I do not seek there, however, for hidden treasures as people assert. I only indicate that anyone who tests mankind in regard to their characteristics and customs and their several degrees of wealth and poverty will have revealed to him many unknown matters, and there will be solved for him many mysteries and obscurities. And of these no enigma is more difficult of solution amongst the common people than "the Extraction of Treasures." For they think that the magicians of the [p. 99] Ancient Egyptians and Romans used to bury their possessions in the ground under the guardianship of the Jinn "Helpers" who were forced to defend them by the power of names. So, whoever knows these names and enchantments is undoubtedly the most fortunate man of his day and generation. Thus have people inherited this error and made it their stock in trade. There is no district in the provinces without a company of these cheats who conceal this secret for the sake of obtaining power by it in the regions which they visit, until their glance chances upon a group of simple fools whom they treat at first as friends. After the (so-called) friendship has been manifested, the "Revealer of Treasures" suggests to certain of these ignoramuses that they should offer him some cash in order that he may buy incense with it for revealing such and such a treasure in such a village.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium ("influencer") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the "enchanter" to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But "in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *akrān* (pl. of *karīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *akrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *karīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *akrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *akrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *karīn*, or her *karīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *karīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *karīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *karīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus ⊢ ∩∩, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *akrān* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *akrān* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *karīn* marries the *karīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *karīn* or her *karīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day [761] after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy."

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David- for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant,

[773] [776] hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

[951] [843] The *karīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīt*, lives for ever.

[304] [951] [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *karīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

[776] [753] A *karīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karīn*. When he is sorry and expressed [755] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

[776] [753] [755] [778] If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *karīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 1/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 1/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fāṭimeh.

[755] A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168--Analyst]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

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Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows: 787

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly. 533 534

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

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[171]
[292]

/81 cont'd/

and was also found in the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. It is further known from Abyssinia and Nubia. /82/

(d) the Sutari: a tall slim man, wearing a white "galabiah" and a big leather belt, about 20 cm wide, embroidered with cowrie shells on the upper edge and decorated with about one hundred goat-hooves at the lower edge; in front there are two mirrors. The belt is called "El-Mangur" and fixed tightly around the hips, so that rhythmical twisting produces a distinct rattling sound. (4) [535] This man leads the women in front of him during the dance; he has the same function as the "Abu-el-Leel" dancer.

There are further some women who play the duff and drums and a gourd rattle. (5) This band is specialized on the music of Sultan El-Sudani, the sultan of the red jinn and the Habashi spirits.

All three kinds of band participate in a big Zar. One after the other they play their special tunes and songs. These songs are mostly very primitive. The words refer to the Zar which is performed for the sake of sultan ....., his attention is drawn to the sacrifices and music offered on his behalf and he is entreated to pardon the patient and not to harm her (6) any more.

5. The Sultans or "El-Asyaid" (masters):

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These are Jinns or spirits; they are, however, never called thus, as they are believed to be the kings and owners of land and sea, according to one of my informants. These spirits are harmful to persons they possess until their desires are fulfilled. As will be seen later on, these spirits may be classified into regional groups or families. Usually a certain group of spirits dwell in one body and it is only rarely that it is inhabited by more than one group. It is believed that a possessed individual will have to stay this way for the rest of his life, for the spirits will never leave him. The Zar-ceremony thus does not aim at [755] getting rid of the spirit, but at inducing him not to harm the person's [782] body, heart and brain.

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(4) Zenkovsky S., "Zar and Tambura in Omdurman", Sudan Notes and Records, vol. XXXI, part I, June 1950

(5) Curt Sachs, p. 26

(6) Ahmed Saleh, Folklore, Cairo 1955, p. 124

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets, must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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9. 539x 776

A song of Egyptian origin, containing in part the same verses as our own, was communicated to Dalman (Palaestinischer Diwan, p. 141) in Sidon, by a sailor. Of the first verse he remarks: The flag-staff with the crescent, which is mounted over the tomb, is supposed to sway, as a sign that the saint promises to grant the request made to him. [787]

Hizz el-hilal, ya Seiyid,
yabu bēra' nabawi!
Win 'iśt ana, ya Seiyid,
lazūrak sanawi.

Shake the crescent, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the Prophet's flag!
And if I live, O Seiyid,
I shall visit thee yearly.

2. The flag of the Prophet is green, as are the turbans and sometimes even the clothes, of his descendants in Egypt (the Sherifs). [292]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [173] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

786 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-
796 known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*munshed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being
● [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

"She (the loved one) has made me a cap
Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

613 627 two joint families to 'level all the misunderstandings' between them. The dispute had arisen between the two joint families of 'Amareen and Karamsha, both belonging to the 'Amrab clan, Musiab section. Hag Ahmad 'Imran, the head of the first family, asked the Karamsha to lend him one of their camels to carry some maize straw from the field, but his request was refused because they alleged that they had no camels to spare as they were engaged in building a house. On another occasion, Hag Ahmad 'Imran insisted on taking the camel from one of the Karamsha while he was bringing water to be used in the building; people interfered and the matter was settled for the time being. After three days, he made another attempt and slapped the camel-driver, 'Othman, on the face, cursing his people. 'Othman, the offended man, could not retaliate as Hag Ahmad was the senior man of his family and older than he, and it is 'impolite' according to Arab traditions to slap such a man. People immediately gathered to settle this affair temporarily and prevent any further complications. Then Hag Ahmad's son came on the spot and started to insult 'Othman (who was his brother-in-law) and 'Othman, finding his equal, stood up to the challenge, but people intervened. The dispute, in spite of its temporary ending, had left 'something in the souls of the two houses'.

The 'residue in the souls' came up to the surface when the pilgrims from the clan came back from Mecca and had to be invited by the heads of the clan. The 'Amareen invited the Karamsha to co-operate, but the latter declined. In the meantime, it happened that a member of the Karamsha offered his help for the occasion but was refused by the 'Amareen. This added fuel to the fire and the situation between the two families became tense.

Deputations and mediators went between the two families to fix an 'Arab council' for arbitration. A respected and pious man suggested the family of Badawab for the purpose, but the Karamsha objected on the grounds that the former house was closely related to the 'Amareen. Then the arbitration was raised to the clan level and the Hasaballab clan from 'Onab section (to which neither side belonged) was suggested and this was accepted by both sides. On the appointed evening, the adult members of the two houses came to the Hasaballab guest house, where they were received and tea was served.

The meeting started by the Hasaballab head clansman reciting [788] 'Wahhidouh ya Gamaa—Say that God is one, O gathering'. Everybody present answered, 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet'. Then the chosen head of the Hasaballab asked the Karamsha, 'What is your story?' 'Abd-el-Gid, the head of the Karamsha, stated, 'We are claiming duties from the 'Amareen'. Then the head of the Hasaballab proposed that after sitting together in their guest house, the two sides should reconcile 'on the white and the reading of Fatiha', meaning that they should root out the past misunderstandings, and should forget all

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classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

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good as the village reciter, this being justified on the grounds that the 'village girl is always one-eyed'. Introduction of cash crops like sugar-cane and cotton has caught on for the same reasons as landlords who can afford to live in the city grow such crops. Emulation of city standards for social prestige is obvious in the example of those few people who white-washed their houses mainly on the outside but seldom inside, in contrast to the dark grey colour of mud, the ordinary house coating. The same whitewash with inscriptions from the Koran concerning pilgrimage, crude paintings of camels, and mahmal procession also form the outside decoration of the houses of pilgrims made immediately after their return from Mecca.

While some articles of men's wear or some parts of their speech have been affected by city ways, women's dress and language have hardly been affected at all. This is partly due to their relative restriction of movement and travel compared with men. On some occasion, there was a commotion in the village concerning the spread of city headgear among the women. This led to their nightly itinerary to fill their jars from the Nile being stopped for a while, as the men complained that women made it an occasion for displaying their colourful headgear.

The villagers appreciate the fact that city dwellers are much more inclined to mind their own business and engage in no gossip. Their attitude towards gossip is, however, paradoxical. It is considered sinful to talk about somebody behind his back; the Koran condemns it, and the Prophetic Tradition warns against it as 'gossip eats up the good deeds as the fire eats up wood'. Much of the village preacher's advice in the Friday sermon is on the avoidance of gossip and the use of the human tongue which could be like the scorpion's tail. Yet on the other hand, the villagers in their formal and informal gatherings occupy themselves with talking about the doings, the problems, the quarrels, and the general business of other people. They will tell you that they are engaged in just having a mouthful of words, or just chewing the cud. It is well known that gossip is almost an institution in rural areas, partly informative, partly interpretive, and on the whole functions as a means of social control and a medium for the formation of public opinion. In this connection, my informant Ali told me that townspeople have more scope for piety, as the occasions for gossip do not arise as among the people of Silwa.

One of the main things that a small number of enlightened villagers are aware of is the fact that in the cities people can find more religious enlightenment as to what are the principles of pure religion in distinction from religion mixed with pre-Islamic customs (Jahilyia), which they think are prevalent in the village. On enquiring about examples of the supremacy of the chances of the city dwellers over the villagers in this respect, most of the information elicited concerned religious ritual. Ali, as well as other persons, stated that city people know how to perform their ablutions better, how to say their prayers in a more acceptable way, and have no mourning

1: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
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customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle [788] over her body on her return.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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553 acquiring new things, e.g. building a new house, reaping new harvest, 782 obtaining new land. Though there is no formal ceremony in Artas (Palestine) for the naming of the child, Hilma Granqvist refers to the notion of 'the flowing of the blood' in the same way as believed in Silwa, the purpose being that life redeems life.[1]

782 At other major events of an individual's life, like circumcision, marriage, pilgrimage, completion of memorizing the Koran, the blood must flow to bring about blessing (baraka).

553 However, at the end of the meal, the oldest member present, or a religious man, asks what the child's name is, and on being told, such a name would be praised by the meeting. The reading of the 'Fatiha' [788] (similar to the Lord's Prayer) would end the ceremony with prayers for the child's long and happy life.

The name is usually chosen by the parents, and with the first child, the name of the grandfather for a boy, or grandmother for a girl, is frequently decided upon. Granqvist has discussed at great length the significance and implications in choice of names, and it is felt unnecessary to dwell therefore 551 on these points here.[2] In this connection, it is reported as a prophetic tradition that 'the best names are those which are similar to the Prophet's names or indicate the subservience to God'. The whole range of names could be classified into four categories: (1) those similar to the Prophet's names, reported to be thirty-three in number, e.g. Mohammad, Mahmoud, Kamil, Mustafa, Ahmad, Taha, Yaseen; those related to his family either male or female; names of the Well-Guided Caliphs. Examples of names of females connected with the Prophet are: Amina (Prophet's mother), Halima (wet-nurse), Aisha, Khadiga (wives). (2) Names indicating 'Servant of God', and this lends itself to ninety-nine names which are the attributes of God, e.g. Abd-el Rahman (Servant of the Compassionate), Abd-el Rahim (Servant of the Merciful), Abd-el Wahhab (Servant of the Giver). (3) Names of other prophets, e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), Solaiman (Solomon). (4) Modern names, usually an [369] imitation of the city names, which do not belong to any of the previous categories: Muhsin, Fouad, Nawal, Sabah.

On the whole, the name is usually connected with some meaning or fathering a wish. The writer was told about a certain man in the village whose children used to die during the first year because it was alleged they had attractive names; as a safeguard against this he decided to call his future children by unusual names, e.g. Malaz (pot), Shwal (sack), so that they would not be envied, and thus survive. He appears, according to my informant, to have succeeded thereby in raising children.

553 In contrast with those in Artas in Palestine (the Arab village studied by Granqvist), the names in Silwa are never changed after the ceremony, and it would be considered a great disgrace to do so. This difference is probably

[1] Hilma Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*, p. 131.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1–50.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth 844
(masqat ar-ras).

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it 842
out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is 831
not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and 832
hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard 842
of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her.

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy 846
and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of [754]
food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may [788]
the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards.

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his 851
room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'.

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the 553
chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually 851
the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a [562]
naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive.

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued [778]
a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth [84]
month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [847]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

[788] [195]

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1]

513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[088] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[909] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
[744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[153] [1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the New Testament.

[083] [2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and purity.

[909] [3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee, those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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head of the family to sign or stamp whenever he received his allocation. I left this job when the malaria campaign finished in 1948 to resume my work in farming. Though farming is an honourable job, it does not suffice for the necessities of life these days and I am now looking for another job in the village.

'Later on I went to Cairo and Alexandria for a month to "see the world", and to visit the holy tombs in these two cities. Indeed, Cairo is the "Mother of the World". Yes, there is a lot of corruption and impiety, but it is preserved by the big Saints, the Mosques, and the "circles of knowledge" conducted in the Mosques. You can also hear the Koran recited beautifully on the radio, and of all this there is nothing in Silwa.

'I occupied some of my spare time in writing letters for some men and women who are illiterate, and who have relatives in Cairo or Alexandria, asking them for financial help or for clothes.'

On asking him to mention the important events in his life, he recorded:

'With regard to the important events in my life, I here refer to the incident that happened when I was very young playing with other children near the railway station. My playmates started to throw stones at each other and when I started doing the same, my stone smashed one of the glass windows of the building. I tried to escape the railway guard, but he caught me and I was sent to the omda who gave me three strokes with a stick, and my father had to pay for the repair of the glass.

'The second event I remember was my inability to speak for some time when I was fifteen years old. My parents were worried about it, and they took me to various Saints' tombs and religious men for treatment. At last they took me to a Saint's shrine near Isna, called Sheikh Al-Naggar, who is considered to be the best healer for such diseases, especially when one is "mounted by spirits" (jinns). There, with my mother, we spent a week, and from that time I was cured.

The third important event besides my marriage, occurred this year when I deputized for my father on a visit to Bardis, on the invitation of our "cousins" there who wanted to establish their holy descent.'

In assessing Ali's life with regard to his point of view as an informant he is in many ways representative of the learned section of the village population. He not only knows the Koran and is well-versed in religion, but he is also well aware of his mundane and practical duties. The greatest number of the learned men (Khotaba) of the village are either blind, lame, or landless. Ali, on the other hand, is a religious man who has occasionally performed religious functions on ceremonial occasions, and he is also a farmer who works in the fields. He takes part in reading the 'Prophet's Story' during the night-celebration of the Prophet's birth in his clan's guest house, and occasionally reads parts of the theological books on canon law (Fikh) to enlighten himself as well as other people on their religious duties. He is also called upon to write deeds and records, since his handwriting is excellent. He once told me that he took great pains

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX II

1796 The following is the lunar calendar and the main religious events connected with it.

Lunar Months	*Religious Events*
Muharram	First day of the month is celebrated as the beginning of the new year. Tenth occasions a 'Rahmat' meal on ' 'Ashoura'.[1]
Safar	—
Rabi Awwal	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday on the 12th.
Rabi Tani	—
Jamad Awwal	—
Jamad Tani	—
Rajab	A 'Rahmat' meal to commemorate the Prophet's journey from Medina to Jerusalem 'Israi' on 27th.
Shaaban	Meal and prayers on the 14th.
[1985] Ramadan	The month of fasting.
Shawwal	On its first day is the breaking of the fast and the celebration of 'Id Ramadan, first feast.
[1985] Zul Ka'dda	Preparation for pilgrimage.
Zul Hijjah	'Rhamat' meal on the 9th day called 'Arafat'. Tenth celebration of the Great Feast ('Id al Adha).

[1] Ashoura is a Shiite event of lamentation and blood sacrifice to commemorate the death of Husain. In spite of the fact that the villagers are Sunnis (Malikites) they have a special meal to invoke God's mercy on their departed.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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[P.259]

Appendix Five

THE WOMAN WHO SPEAKS IN KORANIC QUOTATIONS[7/A]

ABDULLAH IBN AL-MUBARAK relates: 'I intended to perform my pilgrimage one year, so I joined the caravan that was going to Mecca. On the way I overslept one night, only to find on my awaking that the caravan had left. While pursuing the caravan, I found a woman who had also lost her way. On my enquiring her name, she answered, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—and mention Mary in the Book".[1] So I knew that her name was Mary (Mariam). I offered her food, but she refused, saying, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God".[2] As I understood that she was fasting, I recited to her, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful—but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days".[3] To this she replied, "In the name of God . . . and that you fast is better for you if you know". Then I asked her whether she wanted to ride on my camel, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . and whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the Garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly".[4] So I knew she wanted to ride, so I made the camel kneel for her to mount, and she recited, "In the name of God . . . say to the believing men that they cast down their looks, and guard their private parts: that is pure for them: surely Allah is aware of what they do".[5] Immediately I knew that she desired me to be modest, so I turned away my face while she mounted. While I was urging the camel to get up, she quoted, "In the name of God . . . Glory to Him who made this subservient to us, and we were not able to do it".[6] On the way I asked her whether she had any children and her answer was, "In the name of God . . . and mention Abraham in the Book: surely he was a truthful man, a Prophet".[7] "O John (Yahya), take

[1] Koran, xix, 16.
[2] Koran, ii, 184.
[3] Koran, xxiv, 30.
[4] Koran, xix, 41.
[5] Koran, xix, 26.
[6] Koran, iv, 124.
[7] Koran, xliii, 13.

7/A [For commentary on this story, see category 116, p.73-Ed.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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788 539 hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child."[1] "And to Moses, Allah addressed His word, speaking (speaking to him)."[2] So I understood that she had three boys by the names of Ibrahim, Yahya, and Mousa. On asking her how her sons were occupied she replied, "In the name of God . . . and landmarks: and by the stars they find the right way".[3] So I knew that they worked as guides on the desert routes. We went on conversing till sunset, when I offered her food to break her fast, and in gratitude, she said, "In the name of God . . . and whatever good things you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged".[4]

'In the morning we reached Mariam's home, and I met her three sons, [574] who thereupon killed a ram, offering me a grand repast. Mariam herself invited me to eat, reciting, "In the name of God . . . eat and drink pleasantly for what you did".[5] Before I left their place, I asked her sons the reason for their mother's talking thus, always quoting from the Koran. They told me that, one day, while she was reading the Holy Book she came across the text, "He utters not a word, but there is by him a watcher at hand".[6] She immediately took a vow not to utter any statement from that time on which was not in the Koran, for fear of falling into sin.

'The following year, I went to call on Mariam at her house, and on finding her sons there, enquired about their mother. They told me she was on her death-bed. This saddened me, so I received permission to approach her, and drawing near her asked how she felt. She answered, "In the name of God . . . and the stupor of death will come in truth: that is what you shunned".[7] I remained at her side until she died, and then we washed her, wrapped her in her shroud, prayed over her, and buried her. I stayed alone beside her grave, and when night fell, I called out to her, "What has God done to you, Mariam?" I heard a faint voice answering as if from a distance, "In the name of God . . . and reward them, because they were patient, with Garden and silk".

'Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor the intense cold. And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass.

'(Transparent as) glass, made of silver, they have measured them according to a measure.

'And they shall be made to drink therein a cup, the admixture of which shall be ginger.

'(Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil.

'And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them, you will think them to be pearls, scattered, broadcast.

[1] Koran, xix, 12. [2] Koran, iv, 164. [3] Koran, xvi, 16.
[4] Koran, ii, 272. [5] Koran, lii, 19. [6] Koran, l, 18.
[7] Koran, l, 19.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX V

'And when you see these, you shall see blessings, and a great kingdom.

'Upon them shall be garments of fine green silk and thick silk interwoven with gold, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall make them drink a pure drink.

'Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed.'[1]

[1] Koran, xii, 21.

TSS 539

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated on the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

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FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- ●788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [514] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F C the sign of their religion.

304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached. 764 151 [785]

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion. 764 775 787 [776]

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow. 774 775

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them- 764

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 ● 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

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769 Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of
795 bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their
769 recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead.
788 The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly
735 always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

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FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

769 On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will
735 say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of
795 the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation.
292 It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted
152 with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

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When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

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The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

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E 764 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was
799 a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus
788 commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then
533 began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning
531 many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *ʿarīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the
E 764 centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we
E all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with
765 the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days
252 only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my
775 Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning,
356 but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the
782 same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no
E reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended
765 by the *ʿarīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of
775 the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dis-
793 misses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

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E [293] [297] [778]
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Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *ʿarīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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454 It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, [87] are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

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Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

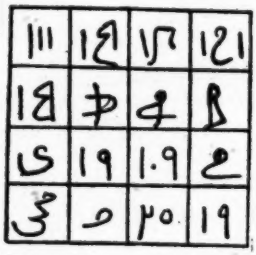

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue. 754 789 158

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, "'*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.
[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

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smells it unconscious. Evidently the man induces his enemy to 754
come to his house, and the latter, not knowing what has been prepared for him, becomes unconscious from the fumes before he has time to realize the trick played upon him. This method has been tried and has never failed, according to my informant.

In order to restore consciousness the urine of a man must be
injected up the nostrils, which, I am told, is a sure restorative. [757]
Anyone who makes a fire of this kind must first take a mixture of *semn* (see p. 167) and olive oil, and stuff it up his nostrils to prevent himself also from being overcome by the fumes.

This device is likewise resorted to by people who are travelling 484
across desolate and dangerous spots, where they are liable to meet 751
wild animals. These, on sniffing the fumes from the fire, become unconscious, so that the travellers can pass them by in safety.

One day in 1926 when I was visiting a certain village in Middle 787
Egypt one of my friends there, a very respectable and well-to-do 685
man, came to see me and informed me that he had had several articles stolen from his house, and that he intended to call in the help of a magician who was clever at discovering thieves by means of divination. He invited me to attend the ceremony, which took place a few days later. The magician came from another village a few miles off, and was brought to me to be introduced. I ordered coffee and cigarettes, and after these refreshments had been partaken of we settled down to the business in hand. Some writing-paper was torn into small strips, and a different name, suggested in every case by my friend, was written on each. The magician produced a copy of the Ḳorān, and asked for an iron doorkey. One was brought, which he rejected, as he said it was not native-made. A suitable one, however, was found, and then the magician opened the book at a certain chapter, put in one of the inscribed slips of paper, and inserted the doorkey, leaving the handle of the key outside the book. This book and key were now bound together with string, in such a way as to prevent the key from moving. A pottery saucer containing a charcoal fire was then brought, into which the magician dropped incense. A third man who was present and the magician faced each other on either side of the burning incense, the Ḳorān being suspended by the key on the first finger of the right hand of each man (Fig. 118). The fumes from the
incense rose around the Ḳorān, passages from which were recited [788]
by the magician. Presently the book began to move, and, according

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colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *ʿafārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *ʿafārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *ʿafārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *ʿafrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *ʿarīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the
[782] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
796 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
● 788 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this
769 religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

11.

The Straggler.

539x
788

The pilgrimage to Mecca, which every pious Moslem is bound to make at least once in his life, is a long one; it goes by land and by sea, and for people unaccustomed to travel, it is attended with many cares and dangers. For this reason the pilgrims usually combine into caravans of some size. The little song pictures the perplexity of a straggler, who has missed connection with his caravan and is now totally at a loss.

[484]

Lines 1—2 are the words of another, who calls to the pilgrim: "Enough for to-day, for thou canst not possibly reach thy goal to-day!" Lines 3—7 are spoken by the pilgrim.

Sams el-ʿaṣāri ṛarabit,
yalli biladak buʿad!
Wana biladi Mikketi!
u-min ēn arūḥ?
5 *u-min ēn ȧgi?*
u-min ēn asaiyir markabi
u-min ēn azūrak, ya nabi?

"The afternoon sun has gone down,
Thou, whose country is afar off!" —
"O, the land I would go to is Mecca!
How shall I go?
5 How shall I reach my goal?
And how shall I sail my ship?
How shall I visit thee, O Prophet?"

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. [114] d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communi- [171] cation of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq (Za'āzi').

Daḫaltē bēt Alla,
la'it ḥamām aḥḍar;
bila"amû sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
5 *Lagl-en-nabi zurto!*

[231] I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
5 — — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, [788] in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḥḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. [770] "It", that is, the house of Allah.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [788]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbîye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥêre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa. [103] [131]

Dināre ʾālet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarraǧ ʿal-baǧūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

40. 41.

539x 852 304

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

gather his friends around him for a social meeting in the evening. The light of the moon and stars suffices, or if in winter they must retreat into the dark chamber, the weak glimmer of an oil-lamp. In this country nothing is known of nocturnal labours either of hand or head even among the learned, and the many blind and blear-eyed people that here wander about have not contracted their ailments through overstraining their eyes. As to-day is, so is to-morrow, and the most momentous events passing in the great world here make on most people no impression whatever. For it is only a very few that receive a newspaper, and still fewer understand it, partly because its language is too fine, and therefore not suited to the mass, partly because the necessary previous knowledge of every kind is absent. Among the ancient Egyptians the common people, such as artisans, were forbidden under severe penalties to mingle in politics. It is only the most urgent necessity that causes the citizen to take a journey, and when he does travel he makes a pilgrimage to Meccah, or, at most, goes to some other country in which Islam prevails. For in the land of the Franks something would every instant come into collision with his ideas and customs; he would have to eat, if not swine's flesh, yet dishes in which swine's fat forms an ingredient; he would have to eat carrion (that is, the flesh of animals strangled, and not slaughtered with an invocation to God); he would not have the proper conditions for the performance of his religious duties, such as his ablutions and prayer five times a day, nor any mosque or muezzin. If he ever happens to have been in Europe, or even in a town in which the Frankish mode of life prevails, he never ceases to tell his countrymen of the ridiculous and preposterous things he saw there, of course not without admitting that there was much good also, especially if there be a Frank among his audience. The ancient Egyptians had a still stronger prejudice and fanaticism against foreign people and foreign things.

LIFE OF THE WOMEN.

Though the members of the opposite sex certainly do not

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rák'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the café's are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning
[178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*hud el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday [783] has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mufruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

[796] [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [943] [252] [521] [526]

789

789 MAGIC--practices reflecting confidence in the ability to manipulate supernatural forces; magical techniques of weather control (e.g., rain making); magical rites for increasing the food supply; exorcistic practices (e.g., driving off evil spirits with noise); potent formulas, incantations, and spells; curses; miracles; prevalent types of magic (e.g., imitative, contagious); concept of magical force; functions and social significance of magic; nonsupernatural magic (e.g., wonder-working, jugglery, legerdemain, fire-walking); etc. See also:

Magical rites in the food quest 22
Magic rites in agriculture 24
Magic rites in the reproductive cycle 84
Magic as entertainment 545
Magic rites in warfare 726
Sorcery, witchcraft, and evil eye 754
Therapeutic magic 751, 755
Magic rites at funerals 764
Luck magic 777
Concept of mana 778
Prevalence of nonlogical reasoning 811
Relation of magic to science 813
Love magic 832

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home. 842

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'. 842 154 [753]

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying), 844 [843]

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects. 789 [843] [755]

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

carefully put by amount to a considerable total, which may be profitably invested. Thanks to a lucky deal in cotton, or some other venture, the former humble itinerant vendor finds himself well on the way to becoming a man of substance.

The house-doors are often decorated with a china plate or saucer fixed into the masonry above the lintel, as a charm against the evil eye. A house may also be decorated with coloured line-drawings of camels, boats, trains, trees, and other objects, some hardly

FIG. 9. A VILLAGE STREET

identifiable. Such artistic efforts denote that one or more members of the family inhabiting the house have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the design representing the various objects seen by the pilgrim on his way to the sacred city.

The interiors of the villages are often very picturesque, in spite of the dirt and squalor usually found in them. The Arabs are far more particular in this respect, their villages and settlements being much cleaner in every way than those of the Egyptian peasants. This difference between the two races is so marked that I can almost always tell if a village is Arab or Egyptian directly I enter it.

A mosque is to be found in every village, and in many places

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the [834] women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

854 789 755 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders 755 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have 854 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing 164 one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en- [144] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer- [789] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great [515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which 743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally 758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their 177 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or, 164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [189] 301

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 789 [187]

[1] See Chapter XI.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid [142] in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

000 Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

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F 304 ●789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [304] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists. There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F the sign of their religion.

C 304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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304 and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut [755] when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

302 Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

[412]

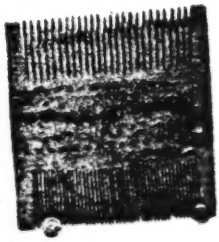

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

[412]

789 The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one 832 of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the 302 fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

765 When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals 589 the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it 302 is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

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CHAPTER IV

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

CHILDREN occupy a very important place in Egyptian 842
society, as will be seen in Chapter VI, which is concerned with the numerous methods employed by women to ensure their producing offspring.

When a woman becomes pregnant she often hangs up in various 843
rooms in her house pictures of legendary persons who are renowned 789
not only for physical beauty, but also for their loving and gentle disposition. The expectant mother believes that if she constantly looks at such pictures the child to be born will resemble them in face and character. Anything and everything that she gazes at for any length of time is believed by her to affect her unborn child.[1] The first year that I visited Egypt I was on more than one occasion somewhat embarrassed by the numbers of women who would sit or stand around me when I happened to be visiting a village, staring at me without moving their eyes from my face. I was afterward told by my servant, who always accompanied me and assisted me greatly in my work, that these women were all expectant mothers and desired to have babies resembling me in face—hence the rigid stares! Since then I have frequently been gazed at in this manner, but have now quite lost my first feelings of embarrassment.

"Ah," said one woman when thus engaged in studying my features, "if I had a girl like her I could marry her for a thousand pounds!"

"Look well, O girl," replied my servant, "and if you are in a state of yearning you may have one like her!"

For a similar reason most women in this condition will endeavour 843
to avoid ugly or unpleasant sights or people, fearing that their unborn infants may be thereby adversely affected. If a pregnant woman should see a dead person, man, woman, or child of either sex, and not take the necessary precautions, it is the generally

[1] This is also a common belief in England.

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If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

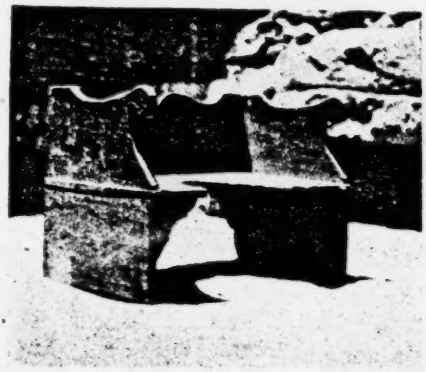

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

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845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
774 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[915]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥṭaf*.

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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

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the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust.

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The sta[illegible]lls two or three

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of [illegible]gland.

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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *ʿafārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *ʿafārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *ʿafrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *ʿafārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

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789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
779 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
779 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
761 been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *ʿafārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

[776 "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
779] widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
779 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [152]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* 776
or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774
ḳarīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if [775] her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791] go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789 ●
the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
774 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
783 sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
789 who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
774 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be
755 buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
774 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).

● 789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. " In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

[539]

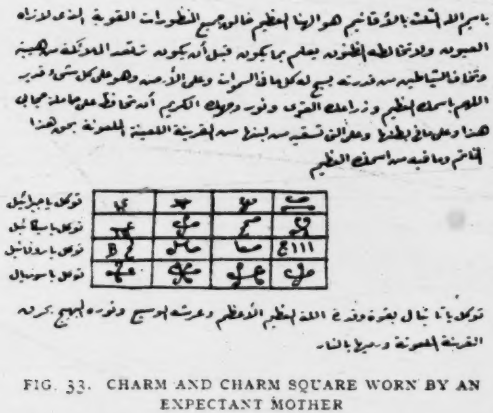

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told : " Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
774 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother), but

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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

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of rings. On one of the baskets is placed a large winnowing sieve, 852
in which the child sleeps all night. When the midwife comes on the following morning, and both mother and child have been washed, some of the grains from one of the baskets are put in the sieve, the baby also being placed in it. The midwife then tosses and shakes the baby in the sieve, its mother meanwhile banging the edge of the metal basin with a tin mug. The striking of the basin by the mother is not, I believe, always done, but on one occasion when I was present at this ceremony the mother acted in this way. The tossing and shaking of the child in the sieve is repeated several times, after which the grains are returned to the basket. The midwife now takes the child in her arms, and covers it with a cloth of white cotton on which are placed some of the grains from one of the baskets. Having first carried the child into all the rooms on the ground floor, she then goes outside the house, sprinkling some of the grains wherever she walks, and repeating "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet") over and over again during the whole of her perambulation.

[789]

FIG. 37. UMBILICAL CORD IN COTTON WRAPPING, AND OTHER CHARMS SUSPENDED FROM IT

Left to right: twisted iron wire, string of seven grains of beans, and bag containing samples of the seven ingredients of one of the baskets.

The child is now taken back into the mother's room, and the mid- 852
wife blackens its eyes with *kohl*, a bottle of which she has brought 302
with her. She dips a feather into the *kohl*, and, having opened 789
the child's eyes, passes the feather across each of them in turn. After thus painting the eyes she fastens round the child's neck the cotton case containing a piece of the umbilical cord, to which are

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

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[285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

789
852

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the
[856] feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs [862]
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 521
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

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527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the [782] poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of the animal was then hung up and skinned. [465] The skin was, I believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the [789] house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a considerable number of visitors had already assembled. [554] The seat of honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

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the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

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CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

584 I HAVE already stated that girls at a very early age dress themselves up in order to attract attention to themselves and so secure a husband. These children are often married to quite [582] elderly men, old enough to be their fathers or even their grandfathers. Such disparity in age is most unsuitable, and frequently leads to great unhappiness. In their attempts to obtain husbands the girls are aided and abetted by their mothers, who resort to magic and trickery of all sorts to secure a desirable man. The two following incidents, which occurred while I was in Egypt in 1926, illustrate a device often employed by women who want to catch a man, either for themselves or for one of their daughters.

832 A certain woman living in a village in Middle Egypt was walking out one day when her glance fell on a young man (Fig. 41) to whom she took a great fancy, and who, she thought, would make an excellent husband for her daughter. She therefore went to a magi- [789] cian and begged him to write a charm, which she buried under the threshold of her house. She then persuaded one of her male relatives to bring the young man to her house on the pretext that he desired his company when he went thither on some business matter. The young man acceded to this request, and the elder man, who knew the exact spot where the charm was buried, stood at the door of the woman's house in such a position that his companion, when he entered, must step over the buried charm. The girl made some coffee for the two visitors, and either brought it in herself or allowed the young man to get a glimpse of her in some other way. The youth then went home, and on the way there began to think of the girl whom he had seen, and to desire her as his wife. By the time he reached home he wanted her still more, and by the evening was quite mad about her, refusing to eat or sleep, and saying that he must have the girl as his wife. I saw him several times after this, and he was in a most forlorn and love-sick condition, imploring me to intercede with his father, who was not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and that the procession is accompanied by men carrying lanterns and candles. As they proceed the women utter their *zaghārīṭ*. The priest addresses the pair, but before he does so he takes a silken thread and passes it over the right shoulder of the bridegroom and under his left arm, where he ties the thread into a knot with a loop. After the address from the priest is over the bridegroom pays him a sum of money, and then the priest undoes the knotted thread. He then takes the two engagement rings which the bride and bridegroom gave each other at their betrothal and ties them together with a silken thread. After putting certain questions to the pair he returns them their rings, and each puts his or her ring on ; the bridegroom does not place the ring on the bride's finger.

E 585 537

After the service is over the priest invites anyone present who may wish to do so to speak. Perhaps one man may get up and deliver an oration, in which, in addition to various other complimentary remarks, he will probably compare the bride to the moon, and the bridegroom to the sun. Others will follow his example, and even women are permitted to speak on such occasions. The bridegroom then either himself thanks his friends for their kindly speeches or asks his father or his brother to do this for him.

E 585 292

Both bride and bridegroom wear new clothes on the occasion of their marriage, and they wear these garments for seven days after the wedding. When this period has elapsed these clothes are put away for several days, and then they can be worn at any time.

E 585 789

When the bride is on her way to the bridegroom's house her unmarried female friends who accompany her thither pinch her on one of her thighs. By doing this they believe that they also will soon get a husband. The bridegroom is pinched in the same way by his unmarried male friends, who hope that this will ensure each of them a bride. I am told that this is a common custom among the *fellāḥīn*.

On the morning after the marriage night the bridegroom when he goes out pulls a branch off a palm-tree, tears off all the leaves, and then cuts off a long length of the thicker end of the mid-rib as a stick. He then splits up one end of it several times, so that these split ends stand out slightly. With this split stick he strikes any of his unmarried male friends whom he happens to meet. Those whom he thus strikes will, it is believed, shortly marry too. This, according to my informant, is a very old custom which was formerly

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common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

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On my first visit to Egypt in 1920, soon after my arrival at my brother's camp on the high-desert slope in Asyūṭ Province, a certain number of childless women sent appealing messages to me, asking if I would let them have one of the bones which were scattered in great numbers about the ancient burial site on which the camp was situated. Their object was to step or jump over the bone in order to ensure, as they believed, the production of offspring. I acceded to their request, and then suddenly thought of my pendants, which I had unfortunately forgotten to bring out to Egypt with me. However, I sent a message to the women to say that I had written to England requesting that certain very potent charms that I possessed should be sent to me as soon as possible.

[532]

FIG. 44. THE FOUR CHARMS OVER WHICH THE WOMEN STEP

When the parcel arrived I caused the fact to be known in the various villages of the district, at the same time intimating that I should be glad to see any of the women who wished to make use of them. From then onward women, sometimes as many as ten at a time, would come from various villages in the district, crossing the lower desert, and climbing up to our camp on the hills which rose into the upper desert. They were usually accompanied by a middle-aged man or woman, sometimes by both. The man was not present at the ceremony, but the woman chaperon stayed with them all the time.

The ritual was as follows. The women first repaired to one of the ancient decorated tomb-chapels, conducted thither by one of our servants, who had the key. On entering they each stepped seven times backward and forward over what they supposed to be the mouth of the shaft admitting to the subterranean burial chamber. When this performance was over they returned to the undecorated tomb-chapel in which I lived. Here I produced the charms, two of which were placed on the ground at a time. Then each woman

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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. 789 842
Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women 842
will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing 778
that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women 789
sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this
belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but [775]
there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's 842
tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to 782
make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain 782

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

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been sitting and proceeded to lift the jar from off the woman's stomach. It took a very strong and somewhat lengthy pull to do this, and as it was finally removed there was a resounding pop, like an explosion. It was explained to me that one possible reason for the woman not having conceived was that she had "wind in her stomach." The noise caused by the removal of the jar was this wind coming away, as they supposed, from the stomach through the navel. The performance was repeated two or three times, and on each occasion when the jar was pulled away the noise was very loud, and the two attendant women remarked on how much wind the patient had in her stomach. As I have said, the woman who removed the jar had to exercise her full strength to get it away, and this part of the performance must have caused the patient a good deal of discomfort, if not actual pain, for her stomach was dragged up with the jar in the effort to remove it, the suction, of course, being caused by the vacuum created by placing the jar over the lighted 'candle.' I was sorry to hear, when making inquiries later on, that the operation had failed to produce the desired effect!

F [291]

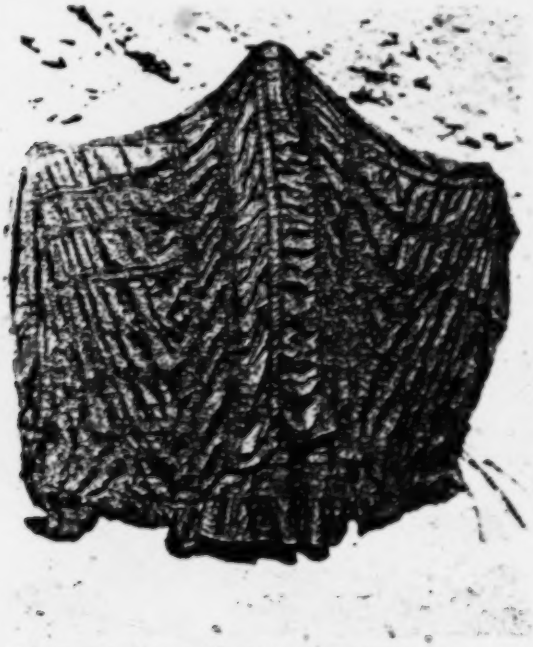

FIG. 47. WOMAN WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN A TŌB

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Childless women frequently have recourse to this fertility rite, at any rate in some parts of Egypt. I do not yet know if it is a widely

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion. 842 789

Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. 842 789 291

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her.

These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of 842 789 123

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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

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[172]
[133]

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

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Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

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842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

> *Shawādīf,*
> Their ropes are of palm-fibre
> And their pails are of goatskins.
> And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
> By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

> Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
> Loosen the noose!
> No mother weeps [for me],
> No aunt,
> No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blindfolded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

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'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

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[312]

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

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Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

[963]
[993]
[994]

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

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FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, "Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

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[291]

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

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around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

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[243]

FIG. 104. CARRYING AWAY THE STRAW

believe, it will satisfy the *'afārīt*, who will eat some of the food thus placed for them. If the owner neglected to do this the *'afārīt* would take some of the grain.

This custom, as well as that mentioned before, of placing bread among the heaps of winnowed grain suggests a belief, at some period, in a corn-goddess, to whom offerings had to be made. So far as I have yet discovered there is no trace of such a belief left in the minds of the peasants, but these ceremonies certainly suggest the possibility of an earlier belief in some fertility or earth-goddess, and the name given to the last time of irrigating a field (i.e., *el-fiṭāmeh*) bears out this idea.

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FIG. 105. HARVESTING-FORK

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[Text continues on p. 180]

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When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *ʿafrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

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E [116]

F C [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

Him, the Highest. Take charge, Angel Gabrāīl, of the illness [presumably in the sense of 'make it your charge to make him ill'] of so and so, the son of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. Quickly, now!" The egg is then hidden in a tomb. 754 788 776

I am informed that this is a very interesting charm: black typifying evil, blood attracting spirits, and a tomb being the haunt of ghoulish spirits.[1] 754 776

It may be mentioned here that in all these charms, spells, and incantations it is necessary to write the name of the *mother* of the person whom it concerns. If the father's name is inserted instead the charm is abortive.

The events related in the following story are, so my informant strongly maintains, perfectly true.

In a small village in Upper Egypt there lived a man and his wife, the latter being very good-looking. One day a certain *ḳāḍi*[2] who was visiting the village in question saw her, and, falling in love with her on the spot, desired her as his wife. Knowing that she was already married, his only plan was to get rid of her husband, and so he determined to drive the unfortunate man mad. To accomplish this he induced a magician to write a charm on a piece of paper, which he tied to an inner branch high up on a palm-tree, where it could not easily be seen. The reason for his thus tying the charm to a palm-branch is the idea that, as the branches of the tree are blown this way and that in the wind in apparent confusion, so the brain of the man against whom the spell was concocted would be tortured and confused. Possibly the woman's husband got to know what had been done, but anyhow the poor man lost his reason. He tore off his clothes, tied a rope round his waist, and spoke at times in an unknown tongue. 754 789 158

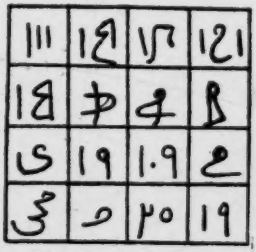

FIG. 116. A MAGIC SQUARE

"You must say," so he told the village boys who congregated around him, '*Kee ree bra ra kee ree bru.*'"

He would also constantly mutter, "Kamaleh [his wife's name] went to the east, Kamaleh went to the east," repeating it over and

[1] I am indebted to Mr E. S. Thomas for this information.
[2] The word means 'judge,' as has been already explained, but it is also, as in this instance, a title given to a man who draws up marriage contracts, hears divorce cases in villages, and so on.

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over again. Finding that he got no better, his wife divorced him, whereupon the *ḳāḍi* asked for her in marriage, and was accepted. Meanwhile, the poor husband wandered aimlessly about, saying that he was king of his native village. He collected *būṣ*—dry *dura* (maize) stalks—each stalk of which he thought was a gun. With these he armed himself and the young lads of the village, and told them that he was their king, and that they must follow him to fight against the other villages. On the day of the weekly market he would repair to the market-place, seize large pieces of meat hung up for sale, and eat them raw. He would also pounce upon the fish which the fishermen had caught in the pond adjoining the village. At last the *ʿomdeh*, or headman, of the village, finding that the poor fellow had become a disturbing element in the place, wrote to headquarters about him, and he was removed to an asylum. Here he died, but up to the last the one sensible word he was constantly uttering was his wife's name. The events recorded still form a common topic of conversation in the madman's native village.

FIG. 117. CHARM TO DRAW A MAN OR WOMAN FROM A DISTANCE

I myself have seen the *ḳāḍi* who played such a prominent and cruel part in this bit of village history, and the poor madman's wife whom he married figures in the following account of how a woman can be drawn from a distance.

To bring a man or woman from a distance the magician proceeds as follows. He takes four branches of a pomegranate-tree and sticks them into the ground, tying them together at the top. He then makes a paper figure of a man or woman, and writes a charm on it (Fig. 117). The figure shown in the accompanying photograph was made and inscribed for me by the Coptic magician

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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bāraḳān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *ʿafrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *ʿafrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *ʿafrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

This time the sheikh said, " I want silver anklets and nice clothes, and she must not be miserable." 755 787

After a week the ceremony called *ṣulḥeh* (p. 186) was celebrated, the procedure being as follows. A sheep is killed, and some of its blood is put on the dress of the woman who is possessed, the people singing and playing their musical instruments all the time. Seven candles are brought and placed round a large brass tray set in the centre of the room, either on the floor or on a stand. Seven kinds of sweetmeats, including dates, almonds, and raisins, are heaped up in the centre of the tray and covered with a bowl, on the top of which is placed one of the candles. All the seven candles are now lighted, and the people present, including the patient, eat, an extra supply being offered to the officiating magician, male or female. One of the people present hands the magician a five-piastre piece, which he dips in the blood of the sheep. At the *ṣulḥeh* held on behalf of the above-mentioned woman it was her brother who gave the money. The coin is wrapped in a piece of cotton stuff and given to the possessed man or woman, who will have it enclosed in a leather case and wear it always hung from the neck and passed under the left arm. This is a charm, and is supposed to be a present to the sheikh who possesses him or her. Such a charm is called a *lāzimeh* (an obligatory gift). 787 755 787 [263] [787]

On one of the occasions when I was present at a *zār* a man came in, sat down for some time, and then went out. I was told afterward that his sheikh did not like the songs that were being sung, and so he could not remain in the room. When one of the possessed women who was present at this *zār* stood up and danced she began to bark like a dog, and her whole expression changed, her face becoming drawn and haggard. On another occasion a man became very violent, hurling himself about and striking out, so that it took three or four other men to hold him. When once this fit of excitement had passed his face assumed a calm and placid look. [776] 787 755

Women on these occasions wear special ornaments (Fig. 120), if they can afford them, and must wear good clothes. People who are possessed by sheikhs are often supposed to be able to divine where a stolen article has been hidden. A young man of my acquaintance once lost a key. Thinking that one of his fellow-students had stolen it, he went to a man who was possessed, and, after giving him a small sum of money, asked him which of the students had stolen it. The man told him that none of them had [292] [301] 787

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

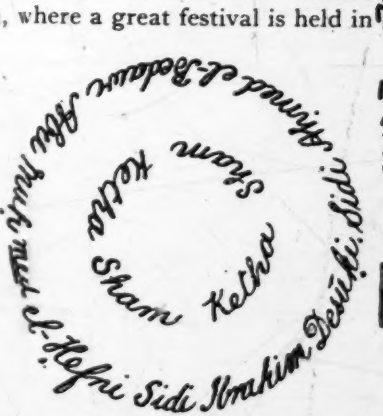

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

[539]

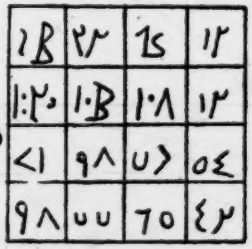

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

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THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

755 [789] [855]

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the 753 757 278

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832 754 If a man loves a woman and wants to marry her, and she has no affection for him, he asks a female friend to assist him in the following way. The friend visits the woman at a time when she is likely to be combing her hair. It is the custom for women to conceal all their hair-combings in the wall of one of the rooms, between the bricks. The friend notices where the woman puts her hair-combings, and, at the first opportunity, steals some of the hair when the owner is not present, and gives it to the man. He takes it to a magician, who measures the length of each hair by the span of his hand. The magician then writes a spell, and, going to a grave, puts the hair inside it, keeping the spot a secret, for no one must know where the hair is hidden. He puts the spell in his pocket, and on some pretext or other (he may ask her for a cup of coffee, for example) visits the house of the woman whose hair he has buried. While he is sitting in her house he will produce the paper on which he has written the spell, and tell her to wear it [789] under her arm, stating that it will afford her excellent protection in the event of anyone else writing a spell against her to prevent her marrying. He thus persuades her to accept his spell, hinting that it may also bring her a good husband. The woman, of course, has no idea that the magician is in league with the man who wants to marry her. She accordingly accepts the spell, hangs it round her neck, and, immediately becoming madly in love with the man who is in love with her, is, of course, only too glad to marry him! This is a very common practice in many parts of Egypt.

754 789 It is also the custom to protect houses from the evil eye, and various decorations are employed for this purpose. Sometimes a plate or saucer is plastered into the wall just above the main entrance, or pieces of old carving, picked up from an ancient rubbish-mound, may be let into the masonry round about the door. The horns of sheep and other animals are also hung over the doorway as a charm to protect the house from the evil eye. A 'bride of the corn,' as already stated,[1] is hung over the front door for the same purpose. Inside the house, on the walls of the living-rooms, I have seen painted designs which the owner told me were put there to keep off the evil eye. Indeed, the devices resorted to for protecting houses, fields, animals, and people of all ages against this dreaded power are multitudinous, and to describe all those that I am acquainted with would require an entire book.

[1] See p. 172.

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F 755 791 when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

F 776 492 The *'afārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *'afrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

E 791 776 588 Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *'afārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *'afrīteh* (feminine form of *'afrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

E [581]

E 791 789 Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of *incantations for repetition*, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

E [908]

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

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scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

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years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

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SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-ʿId eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*.

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

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F 796 789

thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

F [515] [823]

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

F 796 789 278

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

E [297]

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

F [576]

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

C 796

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

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priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳ-ḳāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kꜣ*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḫ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmehet, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

A [113]

[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Eheverträge aus vorsaitische Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

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F A 585

entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

F A 586

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

F A 847 789

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

F A 764 778 823

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

F [799]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fikīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

080

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.

[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.

[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

A [113]

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

The modern shādūf (pp. 190 f.) finds its exact counterpart in paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

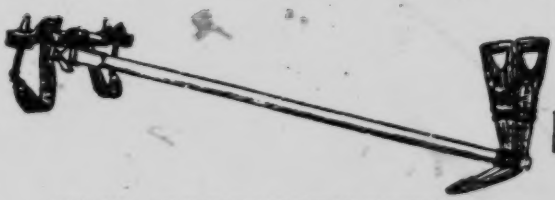

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F
A
789
778
241
A
[312]
[532]

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDĪF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

A
[532]

F
A
431
465
241

FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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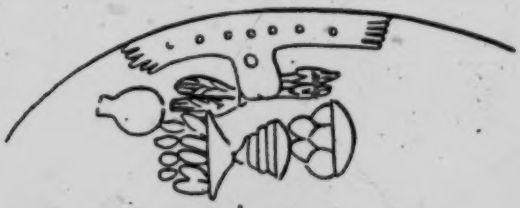
F A 431 465 291

second of the famous contracts of Djefaiḥap engraved on the walls of his tomb-chapel at Asyūṭ the following passage occurs:

> That which he [Djefaiḥap] gave to them [the priesthood of the temple of Upwawet of Asyūṭ] in return [*i.e.*, for bread presented to his statue]



A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 182. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, p. 63.

> was one *ḥekat* measure of northern barley for every field of the endowment [*pr-ḏt*], from the firstfruits of the harvest of the nomarch's estate, just as [or in the measure which] every commoner of Asyūṭ gives of the firstfruits of his harvest, for he was the first to cause every one of his peasants to give it to this temple from the firstfruits of his field.[1]

The offering of the firstfruits to the *mueddin* and the *fuḳahā* is perhaps a survival of the custom referred to in the above quotation, the *mueddin*, the *fuḳahā*, and the mosque taking the place of the priests and the temple. The *fiḳīh* in his funerary functions corresponds exactly to the ancient 'lector' (*ḫry-ḥb*).

A [789] [778] [532]

FIG. 183. AN ANCIENT 'BRIDE OF THE CORN'
After Norman de Garis Davies, *ibid.*

A F 789 782

The custom of putting loaves of bread in the heaps of wheat (p. 173) may be a survival of the offerings originally made to the

A [113]

[1] G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 83; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. i, § 546.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

corn *'arūseh*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *'afārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkere'senb is shown making food-offerings

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Kha'emḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F A 464 465

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 291 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wresinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 134.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

A [113]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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FA 755 789

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775] 776 [779]

G [412] [243]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with '*ſſy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ſbdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [941]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] i, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sîw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F A 789 782

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

000

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

A [113]

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [331]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (**).

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more F 823
often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual F
word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile [842
they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; 827]
marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a F
child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at [755]
this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength F
grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes [763]
his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: C 782
"Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the 823
river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life F 843
and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls 844
to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist 261
earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first F 852
time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and F 764
arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their F 454
savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every 789
birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, 844
and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in F 842
this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable 812
life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born F 553
child is washed and given a name, often include the following 852

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fiṭâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigāb*.]

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands leaving between them a distance which he measures with his finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

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757 One of the methods of "cure" is to draw a cross[1] on the temple of the patient with saliva. This way, if it be free from [755] the harm of vein-cutting, is yet a bad innovation, and will not please those who love the Divine Law, because it may give place to the [p. 63] belief of foolish and simple people, instead 751 of to truth and reality. We have even seen many fools who 304 have tattooed[2] crosses upon their temples to guard against the evil of *Ṣudā'*.

755 We shall now mention by way of wonder and curiosity, not without doubt and scepticism, a method of which the success is famous in all parts of Egypt for the "cure" of this disease. It is a charm (*'azīma*) which is recited by His Excellency Mahdī Bey, Treasurer of the Public Debt, and those afflicted with headache are immediately "cured." The matter has been verified by experiments and testified to by eye-witnesses. It has been emphatically stated to me that many from the farthest parts of Egypt afflicted with this ailment used to come to the capital with this object, and would return after having obtained a perfect "cure." All I knew about the effect of the charm upon the sick, was that there was no danger in it to life. It would have been well if His Excellency had explained it and imparted it to people in whose veracity one could rely. It is indeed, His Excellency's duty towards humanity in view of the affliction of those tormented with this very oppressive ailment.

[1] [Many Moslem women wear crosses, or hang them on their children to [751] drive away evil spirits, or *'afārīt*. At first sight it appears strange that [776] Moslems should be found wearing the Christian emblem. But it is really a [789] case of sympathetic magic. The evil spirits are conceived as being of Christian origin and therefore unwilling to approach anyone protected by Christian symbols. Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has apparently overlooked this explanation. The old story of St. Dunstan driving away the Devil by means of a horse's shoe, the devil's own emblem is a similar case. I am indebted to Miss A. Gibson, M.A., formerly headmistress of the Scottish School for Girls in Alexandria, Egypt, for this reference. We still use horse shoes for good luck without thinking of their long folk-history. For the prophylactic value of the cross among Moslems reference may be made to F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, I. pp. 30–31. Tr.]

[2] [For examples of tattooing amongst certain Egyptian lower-class types, see article in the *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. V. (1923). Willmore, *Spoken Arabic of Egypt*, pp. 364–5 gives some tattooing superstitions. See also Dr. Fouquet: *Le tatouage médical en Égypte dans l'antiquité et à l'époque actuelle* (*Archives d'Anthropologie criminelle*), Lyon xiii, 1899, p. 270 ff. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
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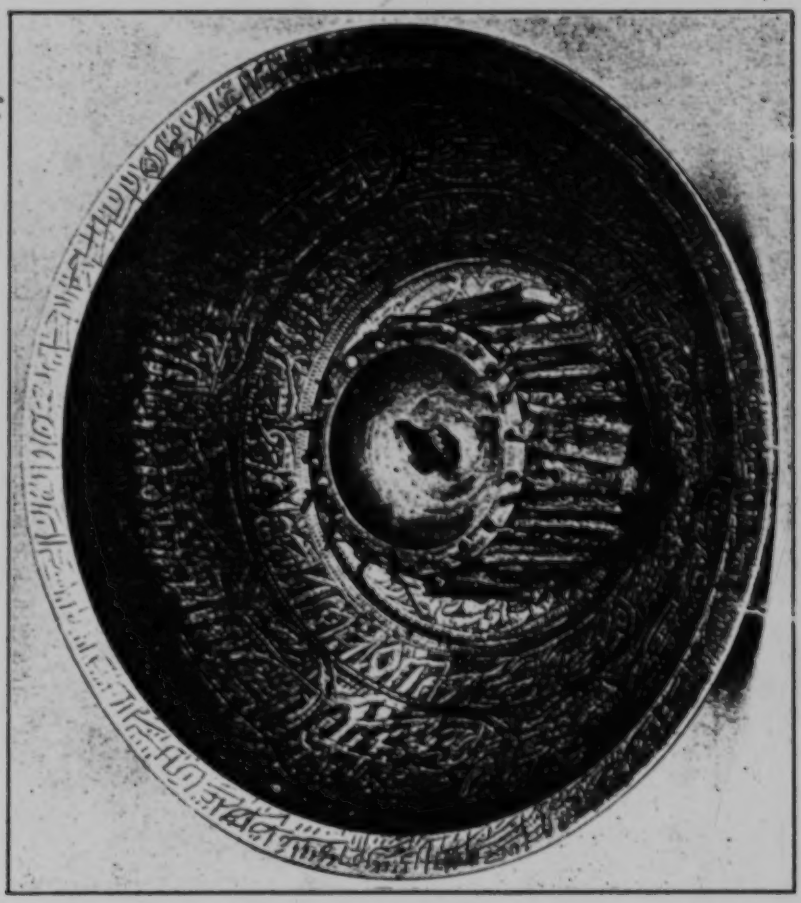

THE "FEAR" CUP (*Tāsat-al-Tarba*)

Facing p. 69

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XXXIX

[p. 82.] THE "FEAR" CUP (ṬĀSAT-AL-TARBA)

THEY say that if there befall a man what throws into his heart nervousness and terror, there is no escape from his being struck either, with venereal disease [*zuhrī*] (there is no need to expose the lies of these folk, since it is generally accepted that venereal disease is contagious and never arises from imagination), or, *yaraḳān* ("jaundice") (which they use generally as a name for nervous diseases). And the "cure" for both of these afflictions is that water should be placed in the "*Fear*" *Cup*.[1] It is a vessel of brass engraved with the figures of birds or inscribed with obscure writings, and after it is exposed to the dew by night, the invalid drinks it and is "cured."

One curious thing is that there is found suspended round the border of the cup forty pieces of brass engraved like the foregoing, and when one of these pieces is lost, there is lost with it the benefit which was to be expected from the taking of the water placed in the cup. I have asked many people about this folly and they have replied: "We found our ancestors doing this and we are driven to do likewise."

The real cause of the disease. It is now established that venereal disease is a disease that is contagious, and not produced of itself, but by inheritance from forebears, or the result of secret contact. So that this false opinion is invalidated.

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they

[1] [The following is a rough description of this type of medicine bowl from one in the possession of the translator (plate 3). The dimensions of the bowl are 7½ ins. in diameter and fully 2 ins. in height. The inner cup is 2½ ins. in diameter and 1¼ in. in height. Round the rim of the inner cup are twenty little holes, from which are suspended forty keys, two from each hole. Each key bears an inscription on each side. These are not easily decipherable, but appear to be some of the *Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, or *most beautiful names of Allah*. A common one is *Ghafūr* (the forgiver). By loosening the central screw the inner cup with its keys may be turned round to any part of the bowl. The inscriptions are too long to translate here. Besides containing well-known passages from the *Koran*, there are likewise pious exclamations and invocations of the archangels, such as, oh Gabriel! (*Yā Gibr'īl*), oh Michael! (*Yā Mīkā'īl*) oh 'Azra'īl, etc. On the extreme edge of the bowl there are what appear to be numbers of magical import. A slightly different example is illustrated by Zwemer in his *Influence of Animism on Islam*, p. 180. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance !)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shell.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

1791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

1796 1789 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muharram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the foot-prints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[1] [The tenth day of al-Muharram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Husain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

of the night and drowsiness was on the point of overcoming us, behold we heard the trample of hoofs near the house, and it suddenly occurred to us that it might be the mule. Our thought was not groundless for we actually encountered a black mule carrying a sack, and in the midst of the sack something projecting which we thought to be the severed head. So the master of the house led the mule to his home (after there was almost a conflict amongst us almost to the shedding of blood, each wanting to take the mule to his home in order to be "blessed" by it, or more likely in order that it might become accustomed to be present every year in his house. The result was that we came to an agreement, through fear of the arrival of some new shareholder who would diminish the shares). So when the mule graced the home of our host he hastened to offer an unstinted measure of wheat and barley as food for the noble animal. Meanwhile one of our friends was judging the sack from its outside appearance. He informed us that it was stuffed with gold dust and not cash. His proof of that was that he bit with his teeth on one of the corners of the sack and the gold dust yielded under his molars. Then the master of the house chid him and said: "Wilt thou scoff at the She-Mule of the Throne?" Then that fellow answered him by grasping him by the throat, saying: "Wilt thou not be quiet after we have allowed you to have a private view of her noble self, that you seek to fall betwen her and me!" [p. 102]. Both fell a-boxing until their voices rose and a company of the village night-watchmen assembled. Just then a black servant, a muleteer, appeared, and asked them to stop (saying): "Did you not see a mule with a sack on its back? It has strayed from the road and it is loaded with ashes (*ḳuṣrmull*)." Those present were astonished, and for a moment the earth almost shook under us. The people knew our ignorance. But as for the mule, it had finished eating what had been given to it, and the muleteer took it away, laughing at us.

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The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmiz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium (" influencer ") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the " enchanter " to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But " in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

n55 n54 except in Allah! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who "envied" you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an "old wife" who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the "Envied" and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the "Envied" poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

● n89 At the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows:

n89 539
Oh, fine salt! Oh, chaste substance!
Your mother is free; your father, fine!
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains!
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die!

[n96] [1] [The '*Ashūrā*' is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

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539

Incense the mattress [*furrāḥa*] that brings you rest !
Incense the spoon from the eye of Muṣṭafā's mother !

Then he says :

My incense is fine stuff from the eloquent Prophet !
My incense is such and such from Our Lady (Zainab) ![1]
My incense is bewitched from Sīdī Barka.
My incense is received from Sīdī Madbūlī.[2]
My incense is Jāwī from Sīdī 'Ashmāwī.
Sindīs, oh, Sindās ! Oh, Mursī ! Oh, Abū'l-'Abbās ![3]

Then he returns to the beginning and says :

Lo the eyes of the maiden are like cutting swords ;
And the eye of the baker is hotter than fires.
Lo, the eyes of the water-carrier bring healing from Allah.
Lo, the eyes of the girl are hotter than a javelin ;
But the eyes of the lad are more protective than a coat of mail.
Lo, the eye of the carpenter is sharper than a nail.
And the eye of a woman is keener than a scythe.
The eyes of a neighbour, fascinating and fickle,
Act with complete deception, saying :
Thou, oh, my neighbour ! wast praising Allah and grateful.
So remove the accursed thing from the home of this poor woman
That leaves her mourning.
Destroy the palaces and populate the graves.
I have incensed this basket from the eye of [p. 19] the mother of Ḥanna.
I have incensed these steps from the eye of the mother of Sālim.
Incense these mice lest they take the bread and send it to neighbours ![4]

[1] [Granddaughter of Muhammad. Tr.]
[2] [Well-known local saint in Cairo. Tr.]
[3] [Saint in Alexandria. Tr.]
[4] [The interpretation of these rhymes is largely conjectural, if not sometimes impossible. The Arabic text which is unvocalized is an unsatisfactory attempt to render the Colloquial Egyptian doggerel in terms of the defective Arabic script. See plate 4. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Such people keep on mentioning in detail all the possible things which are to be found in dwelling houses, pretending that all that year no misfortune will overtake the thing whose name is mentioned in this incantation. Strange to say the common people are not the only ones who believe in the imaginings of these devils, but many people of rank also, whom we would think above such futilities. It may be that the experience of the future will erase from the mind all the vain beliefs of the past, for often they were purveyors of destruction, and a means of ruin and mischief.

VII

A "MIRACLE"

ONCE in the provinces I heard a crowd asking a man, a poor *fellāḥ*, about the welfare of his buffalo. He said that it was "cured." I asked concerning the ailment and the curative drug. The man said: For two days the buffalo was yielding milk and blood. So I asked Rūma (an "old wife" of the village) about this question. She advised me to carry a halter of the buffalo at dawn [p. 20] and bury it in a forsaken grave, and, a little before morning, fetch it without anyone seeing me. I did that and the buffalo was "cured."

We hope that our brethren the veterinary surgeons will give us the advantage of the effect of this "remedy." We do not wish to enter into the medical treatment of animals, since they are more knowledgeable than we are regarding it, and to them may there be much gratitude and abundant praise!

VIII

MEASLES AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SHIRT

THE *fellāḥīn* are in the habit of "curing" their children, who are smitten with measles, by clothing them in a shirt of

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahîn MR13

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrân* (pl. of *ḳarîn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrân* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *ḳarîn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrân* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrân* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *ḳarîn*, or her *ḳarînch*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *ḳarînch*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarînch*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *ḳarînch*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— , or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrân* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrân* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 [761] [791] Again, a man's *ḳarîn* marries the *ḳarînch* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *ḳarîn* or her *ḳarînch* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *dawar*, whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shåban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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70.

Pangs of Spring.

×539 Dialogue between a girl, named Nefise (ll. 3–4), and her lover (ll. 1–2).

Rummān ig-genāin yaḥḍar
u-rummānik, ya Nefise, ṭab.
U-Nefise, rāshe betūgaḥha;
fi-ʿurḍak tiktib-li ḥegāb.

"The pomegranates of the garden are green,
And thy pomegranates, Nefise, are ripe."
"And Nefise's head aches;
Have pity on me, write me an amulet."

1. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.
3. Of course from pangs of love.
4. Such amulets usually consist of a little piece of paper, bearing Koran verses, folded and sewed into a little leather bag. Almost everybody wears one or more such amulets.

Here the "write me an amulet" is, of course, only a circumlocution.

[789]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles,
in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[527] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his
[536] gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is
[789] coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A juggler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

796 [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [943] [252] [521] [526]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
846 *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dowik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subâ'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a
[431] sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[553] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
786 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
784 *ukht* or *karīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
786 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *karīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *karīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[915]

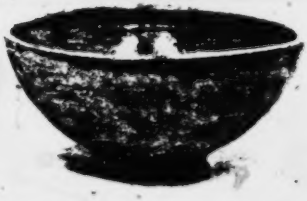

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

789 ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will
579 make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort
776 to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe
774 replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when
774 a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had
[761] been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the
585 belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman
• 791 magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon
787 the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

[776] "Oh," was the reply, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a
[774] widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

776 As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human
774 prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them
150 in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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Childlessness is a real
terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they 842
are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and 554
therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the [754]
ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1] [152]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* 776
or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's 774
ḳarīneh. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human 843
child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's [775]
ḳarīneh, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will [791]
go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is 789
the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For 773
it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her 776
hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. 843
Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear 789
that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

791 832 [291] 431 152 584

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THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

842 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

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CHAPTER XI

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

FROM the earliest times Egypt has been celebrated for its magicians, and accounts of their marvellous achievements have been preserved to us not only in ancient Egyptian records, but in the Bible and in the works of several of the classical writers. Furthermore, many of the tales in the famous collection of stories known as *The Arabian Nights* show what wonder-working powers were attributed to magicians in medieval Egypt. In modern Egypt also magicians abound—in fact, one or more are to be found in almost every village, and they are believed to possess exactly the same powers as did their predecessors in antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

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[391]
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FIG. 112. A CELEBRATED SHEIKH AND MAGICIAN

The modern Egyptian magician, who may be of either sex, is appealed to in all kinds of emergencies. Sometimes his fame has spread far beyond the confines of his own village, and urgent calls for help from distant parts of the country may cause him to travel far afield. I do not think that it is customary for female magicians to go beyond their own or neighbouring villages, but I have known more than one of the male sex whose 'practice' extended over many provinces.

Owing to his knowledge of spells and charms, which may be

[554]

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791 554 [431] [754] employed for evil no less than for beneficent purposes, the magician is greatly feared as well as respected by the villagers. In order to propitiate him they offer him presents of grain, prepared food, and other desirable commodities, for there is always lurking in the peasant's mind the fear that he may unintentionally arouse the displeasure of the magician, who might thus on his own account devise evil against him, or at any rate be more easily induced to do so by an enemy of the unwitting offender.

791 756 776 787 [291]

There is a female magician of my acquaintance who is possessed by a certain sheikh Muḥammed (Fig. 113). This sheikh has never lived on the earth, but is a member of one of the communities of supernatural beings who are supposed to live "beneath the earth." This sheikh is always with the woman—*i.e.*, clothed with her body. She calls to him to draw his attention when she is requested to exercise her powers. For instance, if a sick person, whether child or adult, is brought to her she is supposed to be able, by the aid of the sheikh who possesses her, to say if the sick person will live or die. She is much sought after for spells and charms, and the sheikh advises her in each case which to employ. In fact, he is said to go beneath the earth to write the spell or charm in question, which he brings to her when it is completed, and which she passes on to the person who has come to her for treatment and advice. At such times this woman is *called* the Sheikh Muḥammed, and is supposed to assume his sex and character.

FIG. 113. THE WOMAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY THE SHEIKH MUḤAMMED

791 755 787

755 756 One of my village women friends who was suffering from a pain in her head went with me one day to consult this magician, and to ask to be given a cure. The house into which we entered was soon packed to overflowing, the very window being blocked with

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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791 776 Mu'awwad; another is a man called el-Akhras (the dumb one), while two others are women, one of whom bears the name of el-Ḥaggeh. The last-named is the most important of all, but she never comes up above ground, and Zedimāl is her servant.

791 515 787 776 This magician, I learned, must always be very clean both in her person and in her clothes. If she wears a single garment that is dirty the male familiar, el-Akhras, comes up from beneath the earth and possesses her. He seizes her so that she falls on to the ground, shaking all over, and is unable to eat or move. On such occasions her sons will sit down near her, begging her to tell them what is the matter. Then Zedimāl comes up (I was not told how she was brought up) and stops all the anger. The magician must at once remove the dirty garment and put on clean clothes. There are only two colours, besides black, that she may wear—green and red. When I went to Egypt last autumn I took her a silk handkerchief. I chose a purple one, thinking that that colour would be a suitable one for a widow, but this had to be changed for one of the two colours permitted to her.

[291]

FIG. 114. THE FEMALE MAGICIAN WHO HAS FIVE FAMILIARS

791 782 776 A *ṣulḥeh*[1] is a sort of peace-making feast, and it is sometimes held by people who have appeased the sheikh or sheikheh by whom they may be possessed. When a man wants a *ṣulḥeh* this woman magician dresses in men's clothes and wears a silk scarf such as is worn by the men, and carries in her hand a stick with a silver knob. If it is a woman who requires the *ṣulḥeh* the magician wears her own clothes. This ceremony is described later (p. 199). When I last saw this magician there was trouble between el-Akhras, her male familiar, and his *ukht*,[2] for each person beneath the earth has an *ukht*. El-Akhras wanted to have a *ṣulḥeh*,

[1] *Ṣulḥ* = peace; *ṣālaḥ* = to make peace with.

[2] See pp. 74 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 791 787 789

When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *'afrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

E [776]

E [776]

F C [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

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already mentioned. Though in theory the figure is supposed to differ for the two sexes, in practice this rule does not always hold, for the figure in my possession is said to represent both sexes equally well. Having completed the writing on the paper figure, he hangs it from the centre of the branches by a red silken cord, places burning incense below it, and begins to recite the incantation supposed to be written on the figure.

I should explain here that there are said to be seven kings beneath the earth, three of whom are more famous than the others. These three are called Ṭarish, Ḳasūra, and Zoba, the last having four heads. Their names are written on the figure. The other four kings are called Mīyemūn, Bārakān, el-Aḥmar (the red one), el-Abyāḍ (the white one).

The translation of the charm runs thus: "O King Ṭarish, O King Ḳasūra, O King Zoba who hast the four heads! Go on, three great kings of the underworld, and give your orders to your servants to bring so and so, the son or daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name]. If he [or she] is sitting make him [or her] stand up, and snatch him [or her] up, and mount him [or her] on a horse, and fly with him [or her] through the air, till you arrive at my house." [1]

A man of my acquaintance who knew this Coptic magician well was at one time very sceptical of his professed powers, and was inclined to think that he simply deceived the people with rather clever chicanery. The magician was well aware of this, and, on meeting him in the village one day, spoke to him and told him that he knew he had no faith in his magic. He then offered to demonstrate his powers, if the man would come with him then and there to his house. This he consented to do, and the magician conducted him into his private room, where he proceeded to act in the manner described above. He first called up an *ʿafrīt*, whom he ordered to bring before him the woman who had married the *ḳāḍi*. The *ʿafrīt* was, I suppose, either one of these kings or one of their messengers. My acquaintance declares that he saw the *ʿafrīt* quite plainly. After a minute or two the woman whom the magician had summoned appeared before them, and the man told me that he noticed that her dress was covered with flour. Presently the

[1] The actual writing on this figure is a jumble of letters. The translation given is what the magician told me should be written on it. No doubt constant careless copying has led to this meaningless inscription.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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magician dismissed her and she vanished. The woman had been brought from a village about three miles off, and, on inquiry, my acquaintance found that, at the time when she had been brought before them, she was making bread in her house, when her dress would, of course, be covered with flour! After this remarkable exhibition my acquaintance told me that he felt that the magician really had some extraordinary powers.

The object of one of the spells possessed by my magician friend is "to make a king or any governor merciful to his subjects, and to ensure his granting any request made to him." To make such a spell effective the following procedure is adopted. At sunrise the magician makes a fire of wood, or, perhaps, charcoal, or cow-dung,[1] but not of *būṣ*. In this fire he will put two kinds of incense, ordinary frankincense and incense scented with musk. While the incense is burning the magician will repeat the names of the angels who are in the fourth heaven, and the name of their leader, seven times. The name of the leader of the angels in the fourth heaven is Kilīmya.

After he has finished this repetition he pronounces a formula beginning: "O angels, and leader of the angels of the fourth heaven! O Sun, which gives light all over the world!" Then he again addresses the sun, saying, "I pray you, O Sun, for the sake of the chief king [or governor, as the case may be, mentioning also his name and the name of his mother] that you may make his heart kind to so and so [*i.e.*, the suppliant]." Then the magician writes a charm and gives it to the petitioner.

The charm consists of a repetition of the names of the angels in the fourth heaven, and it must be worn under the left arm. Such charms are usually enclosed in a small leather case, which is suspended by a cord from the neck in such a way that it hangs underneath the arm.

If a man wishes to injure an enemy by making him unconscious he will go to a magician, who will tell him to bring some *ʿurūḳ el-fūweh* (roots of madder), the seeds of leeks, the fat of a crow, the fat of a tortoise (*fakrūn*),[2] and onion seeds. These ingredients, I am told, can be purchased at the shop of a village grocer. He must then light a fire and throw into it the five articles mentioned above. The smoke coming from this fire will make anyone who

[1] See pp. 154 f.
[2] Professor Margoliouth tells me that *fakrūn* is a Berber word, so possibly this particular magical receipt was brought into the country by Arabs or Moors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

The *'afārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *'afrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say "*Dastūr*" ("Permission") or "*Dastūr yā mubārakīn*" ("Permission, O blessed ones"), in case there may be *'afārīt* near by. For should there be *'afārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

F 776 372 782

F [791] [241]

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

F 264 782 776

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *'afārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say "In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

F [252]

A magician is supposed to be able to control *'afārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *'afārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

F 791 776 782

People who are afflicted by *'afārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

F 755 791

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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when their petitioners are poor, will exercise their magic powers on behalf of the sufferers without exacting a fee.

The *ʿafārīt* may appear of their own will to ordinary individuals, sometimes in human form, but more usually in the shape of an animal, such as a dog, a cat, or a donkey. Again, they may be seen by animals when invisible to man. Therefore when a donkey refuses to pass a certain spot in the desert or cultivation his rider knows that an *ʿafrīt* bars the way, and he usually has to dismount and forcibly lead his ass past the danger zone.[1]

Some magicians are supposed to be married to female *ʿafārīt*, and to have children by them. This is a belief to be found, not only in Egypt, but in other countries also. A man thus married will never disclose the fact, but it becomes known among his relatives, who sometimes, looking for him in the place where he sleeps at night, will find that he has disappeared. They then suppose that he has gone to his wife "beneath the earth," but they will not dare speak of the matter to him. This is believed of a magician who is well known to me, and who lives in a small village in Upper Egypt. His relatives have constantly urged him to marry, since the Egyptian peasants consider it a disgrace for a man to remain a bachelor. This magician has always refused to take to himself a wife, and has turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his family. Accordingly, they now believe that he has an *ʿafrīteh* (feminine form of *ʿafrīt*) as his wife, as sometimes he is not found sleeping on his mat at night. Since he is a Copt he cannot take a human being as a second wife, as a Muslim would be able to do in similar circumstances. Such a supernatural wife helps her husband in all his work as a magician; indeed, his powers are often attributed entirely to the assistance he receives from his wife beneath the earth.

Most magicians possess books, usually manuscripts written by themselves, containing numbers of incantations for repetition, directions as to the performance of the accompanying rites, and also charms in the form of magic squares. These spells may have been in use in the magician's family for several generations, and handed down orally from father to son, but in more recent times committed to paper, now that the knowledge of writing is commoner among the villagers.

The Coptic magician mentioned above has several such manu-

[1] *Cf.* the story of Balaam and his ass.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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E

scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has 791
with great labour collected and written out magical cures and pro- 789
tections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

F

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts 755
of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed 753
by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, 123
and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

F

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife 593
one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the 152
evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *ḳulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to 776
him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will 152
come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became 158
mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

F

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, 756
they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and 755
of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776 F C

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. 342 469 F C 842 755 F C

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. 782 756 [152] F C

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. 782 776 755 F C

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many 513 776

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

FA 755 789

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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarîneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FA [775] [776] [779]

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD

After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

G [412] [243]

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *'ſy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ibdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

FA 757 759

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

FA [997]

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

A [113]

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.

[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.

[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sꜣw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F A 789 782

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

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On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

A [113]

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.
[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.
[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.
[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.
[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, 443
money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised 563
of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise. [276 424]

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom. 759

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very 463
busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once 302
a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his [516]
client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty [752
at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore 751]
performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on [304]
something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in [465]
milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, 754-
his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a 756
serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous 791
customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a suf-
ficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book 754
might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XI

FRATERNIZING WITH THE JINN

● 79 SOME of these false sheikhs and scandalous tricksters claim that they possess charms or spells which they procure from the *Jinn*, whom they have under their jurisdiction. One such individual who gained the confidence of fools in the past, was a person whose domicile was in the city of Damanhūr.[1] Caravans used to go to him from all the villages. One of the people
78 of my own village of Zemzem,[2] who had beheld this fellow and
79 had actually seen [p. 30] his tricks, told me that he was once invited to this village. (His story was as follows): When he drew near we saw his servant behind him carrying a bag. So we asked him what it contained. He said it held clothes for his servant and himself which they needed to wrap themselves up in when they summoned the Jinn. His host was a man named Sarūr in whose house there had assembled a mixed crowd of men and women. The women he established in the upper part of the house on the roof. When a great part of the night had passed, the Shaikh extinguished the lamp, which was the only one in the dwelling that had been lighted. Then he motioned to those present to go away from the corner of the room in which he was sitting, because he pretended that the approach of the Jinn was at hand. Meanwhile he was making the audience imagine that he was busy changing his clothes, and that his servant was doing likewise. But the truth is that they were both busy extracting trumpets from their bag, along with similar instruments of deception and delusion, which they consider assist the imagination. When they had finished this, they then began beating a copper bell with great force so that it seemed to those present that the Jinn (lit. the "Helpers") were falling upon them from the ceiling, and issuing from the bowels of the earth, and coming forth from all directions accompanied by this prodigious clamour and tumult. The

[1] [A well-known town in the Delta, capital of the Buḥaira Province. Tr.]
[2] [In the Delingāt district near Damanhūr. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

two men followed all this up with a blast on the trumpet to such a pitch of violence that the veins of their necks were almost torn asunder. This "operation" was to assist in confirming the false opinions in the minds of the onlookers. After this the Shaikh turned to the lord of the house, after he made him stand up, and said to him [p. 31] "Your guests and lodgers have come to-night, what have you provided for their hospitality?" Then the fool of a man apologized to him, saying, "Please be so good as to excuse me. I did not think that they would eat as we do." "Never mind," said the Shaikh, "there is no harm done." and he shouted as follows, "Oh, Dharbākh" (which is the name of a jinnī, one of his "helpers," as he asserted), "Come to me." At once a voice was heard answering him, "To hear is to obey! Oh, my lord I am here; command me to do what you wish." He then said to him, "Bring us here delicious, fine-smelling fruits." Thereupon the "helper" went off, and returned after a second, accompanying his steps with a mighty tumult and a monstrous din, which made all hearts palpitate with impatience and alarm. Then he placed many pomegranates before the false Shaikh, who said to him, "Whence do you bring these?", to which he replied, "From the garden of Munāshela" (which is a village about a mile distant from Zemzem). At this the audience was astonished at the agility of this painstaking messenger and his celerity in fulfilling desires. Then they all received what the Shaikh gave them of that fruitage, except one who lay upon his back roaring with laughter, because he was aware of the secret of what was in the bag. As soon as the Shaikh saw him do so, he said, "So you laugh at Al-Murāḳib, the Protector of the mountains of Upper Egypt, or at Al-Shammākh, who is the master of the complete deed and the fulfilled word, whose armies extend to the country of Yemen and to Hind and Sind. Oh, ye people, escape quickly lest the evil of his uproar may touch you and yours!"

Immediately the men began rushing and pressing together in the search for safety, dreading what he might impose upon the house in the matter of misfortunes or disasters because of that mocking laughter.

[p. 32.] But when the women (up above) perceived this,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

they thought that the Jinn had killed one of the party, so they began shouting and weeping and bemoaning in a most heart-rending manner. It so happened that the fugitives wandered from the path, and their imaginings drove them into a sheep-fold, in which were the sheep belonging to one of the fellāḥīn. As soon as they entered this enclosure the sheep were scared because of them; but they thought that they were devils, and this groundless imagination was fixed in the minds of some of them to such an extent that they fell upon the ground motionless as if dead. Others began scurrying over the ground; and while the rest were scaling the walls, one of them turned behind him and saw two rams butting each other. He thought they were killing one of his companions who had fainted in the middle of the pen. So he cast himself from the top of the wall to get away from that revolting sight, and fell into a worse and more revolting state, namely, by smashing his legs and his hands.

As for the fraternizing Shaikh, he had taken the opportunity of the emptiness of the house, and he and his servant had stolen the ornaments and garments therein, before they both went outside, fuming and raging at the shamelessness of that person, the jeerer, who was deserving of the anger and displeasure of the Jinn.

Strange to relate when the mistress of the house on the following days perceived the loss of her jewels, she praised Allah, and thanked Him, that the Jinn had not taken anything else. "What would I and my children have done," she said, "if the Jinn had abducted me?" And such absurdities are still remembered and handed down by people who believe in their authenticity.

XII

[p. 33.] SAND DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-RAML)

MOST of those engaged in this are Sudanese. One of them will seat himself in the middle of a road near the wall of a house,

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

EGYPTIAN GEOMANCER

Seated by the roadside these fortune tellers, who are generally Moslems from North Africa, read the future from the imprint made by the petitioner's hand in dry sand. Rosary and books on magic complete his outfit

Facing p. 35.

with a little yellow sand in front of him. To him resort the illiterate, lazy rabble that he may foretell to them their dark future and their unfortunate fate. He draws lines on the sand with his finger, after the patient has crossed his palm with silver (for they imagine that the veils of hidden tidings are not raised except after the payment of white money). Then he says to him, " You are a poor man. There is a tall, brown fellow " (hereupon he adds a description of him), " who speaks evil of you behind your back and seeks to accomplish your ruin " ; or, " There is a girl who sadly weeps for you night and day " ; or, " You are restless in your thoughts, and there is a knotty problem ahead of you which will, if Allah allows it, be solved." And in like manner he manufactures all kinds and varieties of stories and tales, and if it is in agreement with what circulates in his mind, then the enquirer will rise and kiss the hand of the fortune-teller in gratitude for his goodness since he has scattered from before his eyes the clouds of doubt, which hindered him from a knowledge of future events.

XIII

SHELL DIVINATION (ḌARB AL-WADA')

In this branch of pernicious beliefs the practitioners are Sudanese women. One of them seats herself, like her countryman, in the middle [p. 34] of the road with a collection in front of her of sea-shells, and fragments of minerals, green and red and black, each with a special name indicative of something that is passionately desired. Their clients are mostly women who had no education in their youth, and now that they have grown up have become submissive to the power of the imagination. One of them comes to the Sudanese hag and divulges to her her complaint of being jilted by her sweetheart, and his abandonment of her and his trifling with her ; or, she describes to her the anger of her husband towards her and his driving her from his house ; or, that she is barren, etc. Then when

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

[787] the hag has drawn from her her desire, she takes hold of her shells with her hands and throws them on the ground, and answers her after this fashion: "The shells tell you that a handsome, upright young man is in love with you but his forsaking you is excusable because a young woman, named so and so, has written lovingly to him; but Allah will drive away all cares and troubles from your heart since your lover will come back after so many years, and so many months, and so many days"; or, perhaps she says to the next: "Your husband dislikes you because he loves your neighbour. This shell said so, look at it." Or else she says to the other one: "You will have a child but you must call him Shaikh so and so. When that happens you must give me a douceur," and so forth.

As for shell-divination and the drawing of lines upon sand, and the writing of amulets, and the fraternizing with the Jinn, we have described them in detail since they are among the maladies of society [p. 35] which lead many times to the destruction of souls. There is no cure more successful than putting the law on the track of such quacks who cure nothing but imaginary ills. It is incumbent upon Government officials, to repair the damage done, and parents ought to warn their children against having recourse to such charlatans.

XIV

BIBLIOMANCY (FATḤ AL-KITĀB)[1]

[791] THE practitioners of this craft are Moors[2] and Sudanese.

[1] [Literally the *Opening of the Book*. Sometimes the Koran is the "Book" employed. A photographic illustration of such Koranic divination may be found in Miss Blackman's work (p. 196). But in this section the "Book" may be any copy of a Koran Commentary (such as *Baiḍāwī*, or Zamakhsharī, or a collection of Ḥadīth (Bukhārī), or more likely one of the multitudinous Magic Books on sale everywhere. Also "playing cards" are given this name in popular speech, and are, naturally, used in this way by fortune-tellers. Tr.]

[2] [There is a current proverb, *Al-Maghrabī kaddāb yiftaḥ al-kitāb*, the Moor is a liar who opens the Book. Tr.]

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

the molten lead was brought, she took it, and after placing a vessel containing water upon the head of the patient, began pouring the lead therein. But Allah ordained that the vessel tilted a little so that the stream of lead fell on the patient's neck and face, and caused wounds which were the cause of disfiguring her for ever afterwards. But the strangest bit of it is that, when the lead fell on her face and the poor girl began to scream and cry for mercy, the "old wife" said to the mother, "The screams you hear are those of the *jinnī* on coming out."

XVI

[p. 40.] THE MEASUREMENT OF THE ATR[1]

"Hark to the words of a hag
To her patient whose sorrow has departed:
'Our Lord the Shaikh has come
To measure your *Atr* for you.'"

THE monopolizers of this variety of absurdity are the *Faḳīhs*[2] of villages and towns, and the *fellāḥīn* have a true belief in it, without any question of doubt. When one of them is ill his people send his *Atr* to the *Faḳīh* (or *Fiḳīh*) along with some coins (which they call the Shaikh's bribe [*rashwa*]).

[1] [The *Atr* (in classical Arabic, *Athar* = vestige, track) is any article of personal property belonging to the sick person, which is taken to the sorcerer in order to assist in "curing" the owner. Generally a handkerchief is used for the trick. The quack ties a loose knot near the end of the handkerchief, and then measures a span with his hand. He grips the other end with his other hand to mark the spot. By a surreptitious pull he can lengthen the space a little between the knot and his hand. Then on a second measurement it is found that the distance has grown, which is indicative of a speedy "cure" and prolonged life. Naturally this is only done when there are chances of the patient's recovery. On the other hand, when the case seems hopeless, the quack safeguards himself by saying that the *Atr* is against him, but that a charm may do the trick. Miss Blackman (p. 185) has a mention of something like this use of the handkerchief but does not give this manipulation which was graphically explained to me by a Shaikh from al-Azhar University. Tr.]

[2] [Generally poor village schoolmasters with a minimum of education. The colloquial form is Fiḳih. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 787
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 754
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

for the space of forty days. The true reason for this the ancients did not know (or if they knew it, they did not speak about it, or it did not reach us). But the erudite Pasteur says that in this space is the crisis in which the invalid is between the two states of recovery and danger.

XXXVI

THE ZĀR

(We do not know the true etymology of the word Zār, whether from Zārā, a town in the North of Īrān; or from Zār, an Arab village East of Yemāma. Most take it from *Ziyāra* [visitation], meaning thereby the coming of the "Masters"[1] into the presence.)

Fortune did not grant us to be eye-witnesses of the ceremony of the Zār so that we might speak of it at first hand, since the Kūdīyāt[2] object to the presence of men or even boys, so we relate this on the authority of the famous authoress [p. 73] Zainab Efendī Fawwāz. It was published in No. 200 of the valuable *Nile Journal* (*Jarīdat-al-Nīl*).[3] She says:

"There is a company of women called Kūdīyāt. They are those who practice the Zār. Such women are the most undesirable and most wicked of charlatans, for they are female quacks. They do things which souls loathe, and at which bodies shudder. As for the women who agree with them they almost worship them on account of the powers to which they lay claim. They even go so far as to believe that if any woman speak in her own home, the *Kūdīya* will hear in her own dwelling. The reason for this is, that the *Shaikh* or the *'Afrīt* [or demon] who possesses the *Kūdīya*, transmits the words to his devotee. For this reason the woman cannot speak, nor if

[1] [i.e. the presiding women who are "possessed" by male spirits. Tr.]
[2] [The chief women of the party (*ṭā'ifa*) of the Zār, or rulers of its meetings (*agwāḥ*, plural of *gōḥa*).]
[3] [See M. Hartmann: *op. cit.*, *index*.]

the *Kūdīya* demands anything, can she contradict her, lest the Grand Shaikh, under whose jurisdiction the demons [or *'Afārīt*] are, may be angry. And so the woman comes to her husband with bashfulness or with abuse, and if she is able to wheedle anything from him she does so. If not, she must sell something of her own property, and put a stop to the demands of the *Kūdīya*, somehow or other. If she should demand of one of them the performance of the *Zār*, the expenditure will not fall short of twenty or thirty guineas, not to mention trinkets, ornaments, and valuable garments which the *Kūdīya* asks from her, with the statement that the *'Afrīt* [or demon] has come to her in a vision and demanded of her such and such. So the woman is compelled to yield to the demand for fear that he will cross her and cast her into sickness."

"Now I shall explain to my gentle readers what I have actually seen myself [p. 74]. On one occasion one of my lady friends invited me to visit her on a particular day because she would perform the *Zār*, and I was most anxious to witness it. I had never seen it, though I had heard about it. When I entered the place I found a wide court spread with a large carpet, and along its sides rugs thrown upon the ground, so that no part was above the other. This was out of respect for the *Kūdīyāt*, who do not like to sit on couches, nor may anyone sit above them. This is done out of obedience to "Religion," seeing that their belief is that what they do is in accordance with the text of the Divine Law, which just shows the ignorance of these women and their not studying the facts, for they know nothing of their Religion except the names of Saints like *Bedawī*, *Rifā'ī*, *Bayūmī*, *Mutawellī*, and other such names.[1] So if one of them has the least ailment, the *Kūdīya* makes her imagine that *Sīdī Bedawī* or some other will come to her. And everyone knows how much the imagination influences the feelings. So the women seek "blessing" from her, and come to her from all sides, reckoning the honouring of her one of the chief requirements of religion, because there dwells in her body the pure *Sīdī Bedawī*, or Shaikh *Muḥammad*, or

[1] [*Bedawī* is the celebrated saint of Ṭanṭā, in the Delta; *Rifā'ī* is buried in Cairo near the Citadel. *Bayūmī* is buried at Ḥuseinīya near 'Abbāsīya, Cairo; *Mutawellī* is the famous *Ḳuṭb* (or "*Pole*") of the *Ṣūfīs* and is supposed to manifest his presence behind the *Bāb al-Zuwaila* in Cairo. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

L

"CURERS OF THE POOR AND DIVINERS OF TREASURES"

"For illness of the body, sometimes healing is to be hoped for,
But the illness of poverty is indeed difficult.
What is the thought of the ignorant when they lose
Their wits? When the quack roams about,
And says, Divination (*jafr*) tells me of treasure.
So the person who gives money will find happiness.
The glory of incense is nothing but a means
By which the artful fashions the impossible."

An Arabic proverb tells us: "In corners are hidden things" (*fī zawāyā khābāyā*). I do not seek there, however, for hidden treasures as people assert. I only indicate that anyone who tests mankind in regard to their characteristics and customs and their several degrees of wealth and poverty will have revealed to him many unknown matters, and there will be solved for him many mysteries and obscurities. And of these no enigma is more difficult of solution amongst the common people than "the Extraction of Treasures." For they think that the magicians of the [p. 99] Ancient Egyptians and Romans used to bury their possessions in the ground under the guardianship of the Jinn "Helpers" who were forced to defend them by the power of names. So, whoever knows these names and enchantments is undoubtedly the most fortunate man of his day and generation. Thus have people inherited this error and made it their stock in trade. There is no district in the provinces without a company of these cheats who conceal this secret for the sake of obtaining power by it in the regions which they visit, until their glance chances upon a group of simple fools whom they treat at first as friends. After the (so-called) friendship has been manifested, the "Revealer of Treasures" suggests to certain of these ignoramuses that they should offer him some cash in order that he may buy incense with it for revealing such and such a treasure in such a village.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

He demonstrates that in proportion to the increase in the amount of this cash there will be an increase in the gold of the treasure. So the poor ignoramus goes off to his dwelling to fulfil his injunctions, or rather facilitate his road to riches. Sometimes he has not a dime in his house, so he borrows a sum from Zaid or 'Amr for the space of a week (to be paid back from the "treasure"). Perhaps he sells his wife's ornaments without her knowledge. Then the impostor pockets the cash and goes off like 'Anzī the gatherer.[1] Yet if these fools had any insight they would see the state of the "Revealer of Treasures," his narrowness of life, his degradation and contemptibleness. And if it were in his power to do what he claims, he would be rich without their petty cash.

But this error is not amongst Orientals only, but amongst Westerners as well.

One of them told me that the owner of a European café said to him: "A fellow countryman of mine entered my café one day. He appeared from his dress to be a Baron or a Count. My opinion was substantiated straightway, for, after he drank [p. 100] a cup of coffee, he gave me a pound and went off without waiting for the change. It seemed to me that he would return. But when he did return he did not take the change, nay, he gave me another pound on the second and third day, and so on until my spirit became madly enamoured of this Lord of Gold, and I began to make a friendly compact with him. After a time, when he was intimate with me, I asked him as a friend, 'Why do you supply me with these gifts, the like of which we do not hear of, even from European Dukes?' He answered me, 'Do not ask the reason, for the matter is wonderful.' Then I began imploring him, so he promised to explain that story to me. On the next day he said to me: 'My friend, every day I extract a frightful quantity of gold, because Allah inspired me with the method. By it one *dīnār* becomes two, so why should I be stingy with you a fellow countryman, seeing that you are poor?' So I asked him to take twenty *dīnārs* (which I had made in the past few days) so that he should return them as forty. He came back next day and handed me forty pounds, and told me that

[1] [A person in proverbial lore who went off and never returned. Tr.]

791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

796 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense.
789 They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the footprints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[805] [1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a
[796] sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast
[785] day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aṣwānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmiz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium (" influencer ") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the " enchanter " to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But " in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE ḲARĪN AND ḲARĪNEH.

[WITH PLATE XIV.]

By WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN.[1]

JUST as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *felläḥīn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afārīt* (sing. *'afrīt*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *ukht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *ḳarīneh* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923,

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

776 "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḥrāṇ* (pl. of *ḥarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḥrāṇ* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each peron's *ḥarīn* is a facsimile of him or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḥrāṇ* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḥrāṇ* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper, his or her "double" does the same; if they suffer pain and sickness, so also does his *ḥarīn*, or her *ḥarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day last year when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was [124] speaking about her *ḥarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḥarīneh*?" "Oh," she replied, "her eyes are also bad." "Poor thing," I said; "but who is looking after her eyes?" "Why, your *ḥarīneh*, ginab es-sitt," the woman immediately answered.

776 578 789 The following is another example of the intimate connection between a human being and his or her "double." When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel, he will take two bricks and place them together thus— , or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the ground upside down, *i.e.* with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart, or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner, the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upwards, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḥrāṇ* come up above the ground and quarrel too. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḥrāṇ* quarrel, the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

776 123 787 Again, a man's *ḥarīn* marries the *ḥarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies, his *ḥarīn* or her *ḥarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. [176] An Egyptian friend of mine died last year, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death, when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *sheesha*, [791] whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *afārīt*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *felláḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shâban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

/81 cont'd/

3. The Assistants: 791●

Attached to the Kūdiya are her assistants. The central figure among them is her daughter. The assistants cannot be invested until every one of them has made a Zar of her own and thereby passed the ordeal. All wear amulets and all are supposed to be possessed by spirits. They assist by forming the accompaning chorus and by dancing during the Zar-ceremony. They also form a special musical band. [787] [533] [535]

4. The musical band (1): 755 787 533 534

There are many different kinds of musical bands which find use in Zar. They can be classified as follows:

(a) the special band of the Kūdiya: It consists of women who use drums and frame drums (duff) and play in the Kūdiya's house once or twice weekly.

(b) Abu-el-Leel: This band consists of men. There is a flute-player (nāy), a drummer on a frame-drum with jingling disks and rings, other drummers and a dancer with long hair who also uses brass clappers or castanets. (2) (Saggat). He is the central figure of the band and the Zar-ceremony. He dances gracefully, turning his head with the rhythm of the music and accentuating his movements by sounding the castanets between his fingers. He directs the women by gestures and glances to dance in a circle and does not allow them to leave it until they are completely exhausted. [535]

(c) El-Tambura: This is the most important band; its members are all Sudanese and consist of the following persons:

(i) The Songok: he is the central figure of the band and plays the tambura (3); it is an instrument like the Grecian lyra [171]

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(1) For a description of the special musical instruments used in Zar see Curt Sachs; "The History of Musical Instruments" New York 1940, pp. 244-259. The European name is quoted first, the Arabic one given in brackets.

(2) Ibid, p. 103 and p. 455.

(3) In Egypt this instrument is called "Tambura", in Sudan and East Africa "Rababa"; it is actually a lyra. The "Rababa" is another Arabic instrument, see C. Sachs, Ibid, p. 255, 246, 253.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

/83 cont'd/

(c) Amulets, called Hegab, pl. Ahgeba in Arabic. They are also symbolically called "Sigha" (jewelry), because they are made of silver or gold although /84/ they are amulets. These amulets must be worn by the patient throughout his life. They are square, oval, rectangular or round "plates", with (9) rattles or stones attached. Some of them have certain words in Arabic or designs engraved. These designs may be human figures, fish, swords, stars or a crescent. They have different names, e.g. heart amulets worn on the heart, head amulets worn on the forehead; the possessed person may also wear rings on the thumbs or bracelets on their arms or legs. 755 301 751 [195] [212] [531]

(d) Candles and incense (Bukhur) which are burned during the Zar-ceremony also differ according to the spirit to which they are addressed. (10) 755 782

The Zar-ceremony

The possessed person has to take the following steps before starting a Zar-ceremony: 755 787

1. The patient must firstly consult the Kūdiya about her ailments.
2. The Kūdiya asks for some object belonging to the patient, usually a handkerchief. This is called "Attar", i.e. "trace". This will be kept by the Kūdiya for several days during which she will study it, get in contact with her spiritual world and thereby determine the particular spirit who took possession of her patient.

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(9) Similar plates with magical powers releasing from sickness and consecrated to the two gods Khonso and Ptah are known from Ancient Egypt at the time of the New Kingdom. See Erman's book "Egypt", the Arabic translation by Abu Baker and Moharm Kamel, Cairo 1952, p. 292

(10) Bukhur or incense is prepared under the supervision of the Kūdiya. It consists of Mastica, Ouda, Gawli, Murr Hijar, Kafur Tayar i.e. different kinds of aromatic woods etc. Bukhur was used also in Ancient Egypt; the priests used to begin the ceremonies in the temples by burning bukhur. See the Arabic translation of Erman. p. 295 [791] [314]

/87 cont'd/

once came to visit her. God knew about this and ordered that the hidden fifteen must stay this way all their lives, i.e. invisible. From these invisible 15 originated the realm of the spirits or masters. It is explained by some people that Eve hid half of her children so that God may not accuse her of lust, while others say that she was afraid of the evil eye. The second story says that emperor Kaleb (18) had thirty children and that he divided his land amongst them. He ordered that half of them should rule the country during the day and the other half during the night. From the /88/ latter originated the realm of spirits. 776

It is believed in Egypt that each person has a brother or sister in the Jinn realm. In Pre-Islamic Arabia there was a belief or proverb saying that each poet has a brother in the jinn-kingdom who inspires him.

The present status of Zar-belief is somewhat confused in Egypt, because every cultural element which is introduced into some other country undergoes a number of changes by additions. 755 171

3. The elements:

a. the patient: mostly women in Egypt, Aethiopia and the Sudan

b. the Kūdiya: usually also a woman in all three countries, in Aethiopia called Balä Zar. Her role as a medium is everywhere the same. Her assistants in these countries are her daughter, or relatives and the musicians. [791]

c. The musical band: The instruments are everywhere the same, drums are dominating, but the bands are different. In the Sudan Zar Borri and Tambura are used and the Tambura has greater significance there than in Egypt. The Tambura instrument is kept in a special room and has a special guard. It is never taken to the patient's house, but the patient performs the ceremony in its house. The Zar Borri is considered [534]

(18) Emperor Kaleb reigned from 514-542

/89 cont'd/ 755
drums and the cries uttered can be applied also in describing a war, 781
or another Central-African dance. 177

The Kūdiya is a real medicine man who is an incarnation 756
of the spirits. The sacrifices, the smearing of the body with blood, 782
the collecting of the bones of the sacrificed animal, the burying it in 791
the soil or throwing it in the river etc... are all elements of the art 177
practiced by any African tribe. In other words, this article could have been called: "An African Element in Egypt."

The twofold and complicated Zar-conception of Egypt is 755
due to the Egyptian cultural type. Every belief of supernatural nature 177
was combined in the Zar, even Islamic saints were added to the list of spirits and some Quoranic words are recited.

An important factor which is responsible for the survival of 755
such an interesting practice is that it offers an opportunity for women 182
gathering and dancing, for buying clothes and jewelry, and satisfying 562
some sexual urge.

Zusammenfassung.

Im heutigen Aegypten sowie in Abessinien und im Sudan spielt der Glaube an böse Geister eine bedeutende Rolle, namentlich unter den Frauen niedereren Standes. Die Geister gehen in die Körper ihrer Opfer ein und nehmen sie in Besitz. Nur durch die komplizierte Zar-Zeremonie können sie besänftigt werden. Die im Zar mitwirkenden Personen und ihre Funktionen werden eingehend geschildert: die Zentralgestalt Kudiya (meist eine Frau, nur selten ein Mann), einige Assistenten und Musiker und schliesslich die Geister selbst. Die Untersuchung enthält auch eine Reihe von Hinweisen auf Altägypten.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E. I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

through age and sex groups. The family does not directly play as great a part in the educative process in Silwa as in towns or cities of Egypt. An equally if not more important part is played by other children, adults other than the parents, play-groups, gossip gatherings, groups of girls going to fill their jars, or groups of boys fetching fertilizer, situations of hand-washing, tea-serving, ceremonies and celebrations, and by hundreds of other life situations which go to communicate the heritage of the village life to the growing child. In Silwa, like the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala, 'the heritage of the group is communicated in situations much less clearly defined than institutions . . . (through) that multitude of daily situations in which by word or gesture, some part of the tradition is communicated from one individual to another'.[1] The literary and written aspects of the village Islamic culture are left to a few literary people who teach or recite the Holy Book and enlighten the other villagers on religious matters; while theoretical religious knowledge is the concern of a few, all are concerned with the ritual aspects of religion such as prayers and fasting.

Moreover, the slow rate of social change in the village has hardly affected the aims and methods of socialization. Children are reared approximately in the same way as their parents and are expected to imbibe the same cultural assumptions, and follow the same path. A qualification must be added here. Growing up in a folk homogeneous society does not necessarily mean a smooth, painless or unhampered process. But however traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as viable, and to that extent, bearable.[2] Intensive case studies would certainly reveal the various problems of social adjustment, and show the compensatory mechanisms of those who fail to measure up to the ritual assumptions and requirements.

[1] Robert Redfield, 'Culture and Education in the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 644.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, p. 633.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with [792] the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[29] [151]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 825 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building. 778 775 766

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

[792] [291]

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass 778 782

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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964 The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

● 792 158 The sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [264] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh 'Abdu 'l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 785 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 787 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 782
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be 842
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [769]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to 792
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 782
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 775
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 577
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145).

These *mawālid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawālid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance.

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yūsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Mārī Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

E 346 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

E [778]

E [133]

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

E 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

E [443] [527]

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.([41])

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give 792 no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a 842 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues 777 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A [765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of [767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*) 535 specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again([42]).

533 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the 538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac- [534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

2.

Trust in Allah.

×539 *Ya ʿēni, wel-miʿēn Alla*
wes-Seiyide u-rigāl Alla;
we-ramēt el-ḥiml ʿalēk, yalla.

Thou, mine eye, Allah is the helper
And the Lady and the men of Allah;
And on thee have I cast the burden, O Allah!

[192] 1. "Mine eye" is a frequent term of affection, equivalent to "my darling". Here, perhaps, the father is speaking to the son.
2. The "Lady" is the lady Zēnab, the Prophet's grand-daughter, whose greatly esteemed mosque lies in south Cairo. [192] The "men of Allah" are the saints (shêkhs), whose graves lie scattered throughout the land.

3.

Exhortation to Prayer.

[182] *Ya ʾalbi, ṣalli wimdaḥ Moḥammed*
illi ṣalato mana'it guhannim.

Pray, my heart, and praise Moḥammed,
Whose prayer has put away hell.

2. From pious Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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×539 And when ye sing: "O Moḥammed!",
782 Go ye and come ye [— O Moḥammed].
But whoever fails to say: "O Moḥammed!",
10 Will lie, some morning, slain [— O Moḥammed],
In the bean-field, [— O Moḥammed],
He and his mother and the wife of his uncle!
[O Moḥammed].

1—4. Invocation of the Prophet Moḥammed.

2. "By Allah" is used to confirm the truth of what follows in the song.

[792] 3. Rāma is, according to Maḥmûd, a name of the mother of the Prophet.

5. Addressed to companions.

8. "Go ye and come ye" is, of course, to be completed with: [192] bis-salāme, "in safety". The road to the excavations is often [776] long and the peasant-boy's imagination pictures ḥarāmiye (thieves) and 'afārit (evil spirits) lurking about everywhere. There is, in Cairo, a proverb, which runs: kullē ḫarâbe welina fiha 'afrit, "In every ruined house there lurks for us an evil spirit." In order to understand this proverb, it is necessary to remember, that in the native quarters of oriental cities, [362] half or totally ruined houses are a much more frequent sight [172] than with us. Moreover, Abu Gūrâb (the ruin of the sun-temple, see page II) before our excavations, was regarded as full of evil spirits.

11. In the spring, wide stretches of land are covered with [241] the tall fûl plant or hog's bean. In Egypt this bean is an [262] important element in the nourishment of man and beast. Compare No. 14, l. 2.

12. He involves with him in his ruin, even his dearest relatives.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on the western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena.[1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, the becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*
[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.
[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran.

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab.

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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793 'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the prefix of 'Sheikh'.

871 794 [896] In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves [732] in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it.

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); Az-Zarnuji, *Ta 'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta 'allum* (translated by C. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom 763
to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite
careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief
associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is
a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, per-
haps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts
of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing
near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with [774]
their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for
a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken 764
place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs
drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then
washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from [778]
a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a
sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fiḳīh*,
who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the [767]
remains of the soap used in the washing. [793]

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly
after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning
or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the [656]
other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or [751]
an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor
and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and 763
friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment
the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of pro-
fessional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many 764
of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven
times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs,
usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This
perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present
day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud ; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose
151 lamentations are the loudest of all.
[163] It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar
764 made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the
779 founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

[137]
[133]
[764]

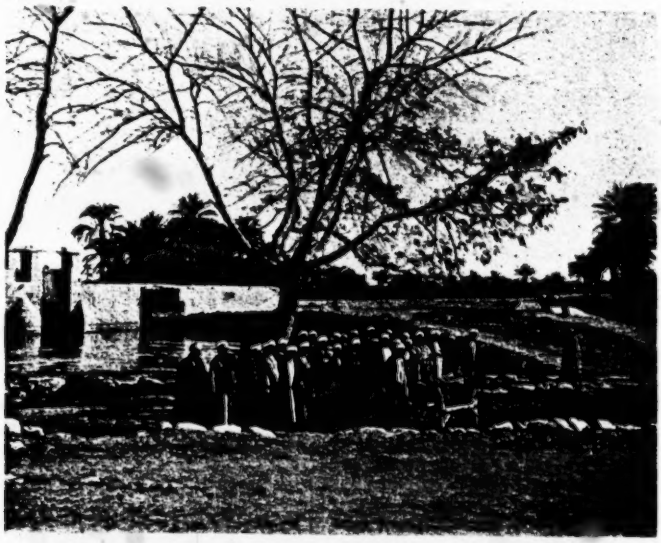

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

764 It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their
151 wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites
[193] passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

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764 selves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends, all observing almost complete silence, except on arrival, when they may say, "*El-baḳīyeh fi ḥayātak*"—literally, "May what remains over be in your life!"—*i.e.*, "May the rest of the days of the dead be added to your life!"

764 535 The female mourners, including the professional wailers, congregate together, either inside the house or in some secluded spot outside. Here they continue to utter their piercing cries, and usually also engage in a dance. The dancers, each one swaying slightly backward and forward, move in a circle, smiting their cheeks the while with both hands in rhythmic accompaniment to their chanting and cries. I have seen women thus beating their cheeks till blood flowed. One of the dancers often beats a *nadam*, [534] a single-membrane drum, resembling a tambourine, but without jingles.

765 788 782 793 The mourning ceremonies are continued for seven days, though very occasionally they may last for three days only. The first evening after the burial *fuḳahā* come to the house, one of them bringing a large rosary, called a *sibḥeh*, consisting of five hundred to a thousand large beads. They repeat passages from the Ḳorān a thousand times, keeping count of the recitations by means of the beads. The merit of this religious exercise is conveyed to the deceased. During the period of mourning *fuḳahā* come daily to the house to recite the Ḳorān, but the ceremony with the rosary is performed on the first night only.

765 793 [465] The *fuḳahā* are usually given a small sum of money for their services, and also at intervals in their recitations they are refreshed with coffee and cigarettes, but no one, either performer or listener, would ever think of smoking while they are in progress. I have been present several times on such occasions, and have been much impressed by the excellence of many of the voices, as well as by the reverent attitude of all the people present. The *fuḳahā* sit cross-[516] legged on a bench inside the house, and, as they recite, sway from side to side, holding one hand against one side of the face. One of them usually acts as leader, and the others join in as a chorus; [788] or sometimes the chief *fiḳīh* will tell one of his subordinates to take his place and recite. The recitations last for an hour or more.

765 431 On the seventh day after a death the mourning at the house ceases, and the women, accompanied by their male relatives, visit the grave. They bring loaves of bread, called *kaḥk*, which are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793 ●

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

F 764 794 788 533

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

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'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

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FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

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Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

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[793]
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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried. The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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of sheikhs, and the Muslim remarked that the Copts had no real saints, but that what they believed about their so-called saints was all rubbish. To this his host replied, "That is not so; we have a celebrated saint to whom the church close by is dedicated." But his guest scoffed at him.

At night, when the Muslim was sleeping in a room in the upper story of the house—his host sleeping on the ground floor—a young man appeared before him, and touched him to wake him from his slumbers. This uninvited guest then seized the Muslim by the throat and asked him how he dared to speak of the Coptic saints in the scornful way he had done.

Meanwhile, the host, hearing his guest choking, and crying out, "Leave me, leave me! I am wrong, I am wrong!" rushed up, thinking that he was being attacked by thieves. When he arrived on the scene he found his guest weeping, so he asked him what was the matter. The Muslim then told him of his unexpected visitor, and described his appearance. From the description the host knew that the mysterious person was the great saint himself. So loud had been the cries of the terrified Muslim that the whole neighbourhood had heard him.

On the following morning the now repentant Muslim repaired to the church dedicated to Mārī Egladiūs el-'Azab, and, with shoes hanging round his neck, knelt before the altar and prayed to the saint, saying, "Pardon me, pardon me, pardon me!" After this he left the church.

Since this visitation of the saint the Muslim, who still remains a follower of Islām, sends every year a gift of wax for the manufacture of candles used in the services held in the church, together with a present of incense.

It must be explained here that it is the custom all over Egypt, when a Copt or a Muslim has committed a wrong against a saint or sheikh, for him to repair to the church or mosque and borrow a pair of shoes such as are worn by the poor *fellāḥīn*. These shoes are suspended by a cord round the neck of the penitent, who must wear them in this way as he kneels before the altar, or *ḳibleh*,[1] as the case may be. As he kneels he must repeat the words "Pardon me," seven, five, or three times, the number of repetitions being decided by the priest or *imām* present in the church or mosque. When this act of repentance is finished the man goes out and returns

[1] The prayer-niche turned toward Mecca.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the shoes to the original owner. The shoes must always be those of a very poor *fellāḥ* who is in wretched circumstances, thus indicating the attitude of mind of the penitent man in the presence of the saint or sheikh whom he has wronged.

E 782 793

With regard to the offering of wax, it may be of interest to explain that the candles used in religious ceremonies in the Coptic church are always made by the priest himself or else by the servant who is responsible for the cleaning of the church.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sîw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

F A 789 793 755 796

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an '*afrit* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

F A 789 793

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

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[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawdga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God,
181 and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
862 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (**).

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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535 the inevitable castanets (like the crotali of the ancients),
527 and casts around coquettish glances. Whatever of art is
[534] displayed consists in movements of the trunk and hips—impossible to imitate—the limbs being almost at rest. Occasionally the girl moves slowly round in a circle, gives a slight hop, perhaps swings a sword, and sinks gradually to the ground balancing a small cup on her forehead, or whirls herself round sitting on a narrow-mouthed pitcher. Yet the public are enthusiastic to the highest degree about those female performers, a popularity which no doubt they owe more to their affability than to their artistic skill, since they joke with everybody and everybody with them without any embarrassment. But dancing is given up entirely to them, and if any one were to catch them round the waist, *alla Franka*, and dance round in a galop with them, he would bring abuse and disgrace on himself, and would be set down as crazy. It is a modern and Frankish custom for members of both sexes to dance together in close contact, and such a practice was also unknown to classical antiquity. The Oriental loves dancing and music, but seldom cultivates them in person, getting people who practise these arts as their profession to perform for his entertainment; and their profession is never held in esteem, but is regarded as degrading, like that of an actor in the Frankish middle ages. For
533 a grown-up man of the better class to sing by himself, or
[558] merely to join in with others, or even to amuse himself on a musical instrument, is regarded as undignified, and still more for ladies. At such *fantasies* the representatives of religion,
527 the kadis and ulema, do not fail to be present, and laugh
793 heartily even at obscenities. The priests of ancient Egypt, as also the severe Socrates, saw no harm in having music and dancing in their houses; they even practised music themselves. The higher ranks did not dance and sing themselves, but hired professional dancing-girls and musical performers
[171] as at the present day. Among the Greeks music and dancing were in high esteem, and formed a part of education—even the gods themselves danced.

535 The performance of the *chauel* or male dancer is not much
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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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858 to those of the adults, he is debarred from adult circles, and adult activities; and grown-ups do not expect their children to express any opinion on matters which are outside their domain. Although they are expected to orientate themselves to the same sphere of life, children are not given any significant role in the social life of the village, apart from their economic role. Until the age of twelve the children are not expected to go to the mosque to say their prayers, and if they go they are allowed to [149] sit in the back row only, and never in the front or the middle. Women and girls, however, do not go to the mosque at all in Silwa, and are not expected to do so. There is no religious sanction for this, however; Islam has enjoined mosque prayers on both sexes. Compared with the Tale child, the social sphere of the Silwa child is more restricted in many respects. In the former society, the social sphere of adults and children is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. 'Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children, or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system.'[1] In Silwa, however, although children may know about the happenings and events of the adult world in the social sphere, they are not expected to take an active part, or to show interest in them, unless they are asked to do so. On some occasions the writer heard children who, on enquiring about the guests coming to the house, or the nature of the gifts taken to relatives, or where father was going, were silenced and asked to 'mind their own business'.

828 Moreover, the process of 'growing-up' is believed to be affected by the character traits of the parents and close relatives on both the patrilineal and matrilineal side.[2] The belief is that the virtues and vices of the parents and their family line are transmitted, through heredity, to their offspring. Especially in the case of outstanding physical features or social characteristics, their presence is invariably accounted for by inheritance from ancestors; if not directly inherited from the parents, they could be traced to the grandfather or to the great-grandfather. Trends of character, whether of meanness, hospitality, piety, wickedness, aggression or docility, seem to run in the families. A person who deviates from what is known about his family is referred to as 'a mistake' or 'a slip', whether in praise or blame depending on the context. One hears sayings and phrases to the effect that 'so-and-so by nature is good or bad'; 'his roots are rotten'; 'nature prevails over nurture (attaba yaghlib attatbu)'; 'people are of different metals; those who were good in the pre-Islamic period, will be equally good in Islam (annas maadin), Khiyaruhum fi al-Jahiliya, khiyaruhum fi al-Islam'.

861 It must be pointed out here that the process of socialization which is strongly felt during childhood and adolescence is not only conducted through the agency of the family, both conjugal and extended, but also

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 9.
[2] See Chapter IV, concerning the child's character traits.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garmen
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hifthā'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Muqkadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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872 294 [562]

learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

[M8]

After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

21 [386] use 8.

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

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872 more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. 794 The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

[539] [782]

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' [576] will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran. 872 794

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab. 794 [782] [865] [876]

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at 793

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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793 'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the prefix of 'Sheikh'.

871 In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims
• 794 in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people
[896] in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves
[732] in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it.

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); Az-Zarnuji, *Ta 'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta 'allum* (translated by G. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

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the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it. It will be shown in the next chapter how the role of the Kuttab has been seriously challenged by the modern system of schools.

In addition to the Kuttab, the village mystic order of Nakshabandia must be considered as an organized educational institution for adolescents and young men, where they enjoy comradeship of 'The Path' and learn religious and mystic practices, stories and verses.[1]

[1] See Chapter IX.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix One

THE LIFE HISTORY OF INFORMANTS

GENERAL REMARKS

In writing the life history of my informants—Ali (who is a distant relative) and Mahmoud (who is related by marriage)—I found very little direct information forthcoming from them. Although their confidence was won with respect to their forthrightness in describing the village life and traditions, both were very reserved in talking about their own life. Neither relished the idea of being singled out from the whole village, or being mentioned in a book. 'Why do you want to portray my life especially, and bring it before the English people?' said Mahmoud. 'Let us (in Arabic the plural pronoun is commonly used instead of the first singular) live covered and unexposed in our village; we do not want other people to know about the details of our life.' The writer realized this difficulty from the very beginning of his work, and tried to convince the villagers, as well as the informants, that such research had nothing to do with the Government or any other official authority in Egypt and might bring indirect benefit to them, for the suspicion had to be eradicated that anything written might be taken as a personal commitment, causing as much anxiety to the persons concerned as if they were giving evidence in a court of law. This difficulty rose again in the Rorschach testing of adults, whom the writer had to assure and even sometimes to swear by the name of Allah that this would not subject them to any official pressure or interference.

159 129 [156] [193] [641]

ALI

Ali, being literate, was asked to write down all he could remember of his life-story, the account of which is translated in the following:

159

'I was born in 1921, just a few days before the "Mawlid", the birth anniversary of the Prophet. I cannot remember anything in my life till the age of seven, except that I used to follow my older brother to the Kuttab from the age of five, and play with boys of my age. On reaching the age of seven, I started to go regularly all by myself to the Kuttab. In 1929 I began to go to the elementary school in the morning, and to the Kuttab in the afternoon, and I remained in the school until 1936, when

[794]

[P.240 is blank]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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APPENDIX I

159 I had to leave and concentrate on memorizing the Koran. After one year
794 I finished the Koran and recited it for my Sheikh Ahmad Mousa to his satisfaction.[1] Then my father offered a "Karama" in the Kuttab, consisting of a meal of wheat bread and meat eaten in the Kuttab by the boys and whoever is present (as one is not supposed to invite persons for a "karama") together with a gift of a white garment to the Sheikh. This was followed by a ceremony called "dorah" (classical "dawrah") going round the village, with sheikhs reciting odes (qasidas) in praise of the Prophet, beating the drum and the tambourine (tar), and followed by other local folk as well as the Kuttab children. On this occasion I wore white
[086] clothes; this is a holy practice like that of pilgrims returning from Mecca, who also don white clothes.[2] After this, I stayed in the Kuttab as an "Areef-prefect", repeating the Koran three times during the first year, at the end of which I sat for an examination (oral) set by one of the Ministry of Education inspectors, and on passing it I received a prize of £E2. I remained as an "areef" for three years, teaching the other children, learning the "Munawi mawled"—a rhyming prose as well as poems on the birth of the Prophet, the "matn-al-Ishmawi"—in the Islamic law (Fikh), "Matn al Jawhara" in monotheistic theology (Tawheed), which is in poem
159 form. From the age of nine I had to help my father and older brother in farm work, but I was not pressed to work as my family wished me to devote myself to Koranic studies, and this is one of the things that distinguished me from many other boys in the village. But later in life, especially after my marriage, I had to work harder in the fields. My older brother was responsible for bringing fertilizer from the hill, while my father and myself helped in the other farm tasks such as irrigation, distribution of manure, and harvesting.

'In 1940 I went to Edfu, where the first stage of military conscription
[002] examinations takes place, and I was exempted on the basis of my knowing the Koran, after I had succeeded in the oral examination held for the purpose.[3]

'A year before I was called up for conscription, I left the Kuttab and devoted myself to farm work, and I got married when I was nineteen years old. I worked on my father's land until 1944, when I was appointed as a malaria supervisor to distribute tablets of quinine to the families during
[744] the malaria epidemic. For this purpose I had to make a survey of the population in the village to distribute the tablets, accordingly asking the

[1] A memory task of some magnitude: the Koranic text is a little longer than that of the
[153] New Testament.

[2] Wearing of white clothes on certain occasions is a symbol of ceremonial cleanliness and
[083] purity.

[3] Till 1948, sons of village omdas and sheikhs, those who paid £E20 exemption fee,
those who knew the Koran by heart and University students could be exempted from
[002] military conscription. Since then a law has been passed decreeing that military conscription is universal, with very few exemptions, e.g. the single supporter of a family in the case of the father's death.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR 10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 764 794 788 533 531 Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

E 764 There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

E 765 258 775 356 782 The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

E 765 775 793 On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

243 789 798 'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḥamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

[241] [312]

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

243 431 Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *summāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

[463] [793] [794]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep
[782] the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing excellent business (Fig. 143). 796 769

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all these *mawālid*, and those who sold them attracted a considerable number of customers. These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game. 796 769 521 [531] [994] 992 [998] [171]

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Umbārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 796 769 538

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-ʿĪd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-ʿĪd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 585

entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

F A 586

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

F A 847 789

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

F A 764 778 823

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

F [794]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fikīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.

[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.

[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

A [113]

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

E
F
651 It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

E
F
659 Every year, however, the Government brings under
311 cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or
464 too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

E
F
423 Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid
794 all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (").
429 This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

God being thus the sole owner, the beneficiaries of *wakf* lands enjoy their revenues, but cannot realise them. The Christians of the Oriental Churches have also followed this method of dealing with property, and today more than 610,000 feddans, or about a sixth of the cultivated area, are thus withdrawn from the market. E F 423 794 429

A Ministry of Wakfs has the task of administering these ancient Moslem bequests, and ensuring the fulfilment of the founders' wishes. But it is clear that these properties in mortmain, with no human landowner, are the least productive. However, for this very reason, owing to the lack of interest on the part of managers and agents, who are liberally paid out of whatever profits they make, the fellaheen on *wakf* lands have a fairly easy life. F [461]

Private Property

Official publications take a pride in pointing out that Egypt is a country of small landowners, and quote recent statistics in support of their claim. It is true that a million and a half fellaheen each own an average of a third of a feddan. Half a million more own from one to five feddans each, and about 150,000 own from 5 to 50 feddans. But these small farmers together do not possess more than half the cultivated land. In 40 years the area held by smallholders has increased by 850,000 feddans or 83%, while the number of the smallholders themselves has increased by 355% [18]. Thus, while on the one hand two and a quarter million fellaheen own less than two million feddans, on the other hand more than two million feddans are in the hands of only 12,559 landowners. Of these, twenty-three Egyptians and twenty-five foreigners own among them some three hundred thousand feddans. F 423

The greatest landowner in the country is the King. The late King Fuad I, who at his accession in 1917 owned eight hundred feddans, had acquired twenty-eight thousand feddans by the time of his death in 1936. This figure does not include the revenues from forty-five thousand feddans of *wakf* land entrusted to his supervision. The estates of limited companies amount to a hundred and fifty thousand feddans. Egypt is still in reality a country of large landowners. E. F 423 643

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

donkey to the fields and the *gamoosa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
siga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

747 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *galla-*
361 *biyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by
291 the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the
431 Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the
515] entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk
[346 of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached
794] to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[758 Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who
743] has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not in-
181] capable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Copts MR10

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [557]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 794 765 769 735

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*essuk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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586 at reconciliation, has always to give effect to the expressed wish of the husband. The wife also can press for a divorce, and is not, therefore, devoid of all rights; but in this case, besides losing her maintenance, she also, as a rule, loses the [583] jointure that would otherwise fall to be paid to her by the husband as stipulated in the marriage contract. The divorce cannot be judicially forced from the husband, he must say the words "Thou art repudiated," and if he will not do so he has to give his wife a *bêt shér 'ai*, that is, a separate dwelling and maintenance; it is a kind of divorce *a mensâ et thoro*. During the continuance of this relationship the woman can- [587] not marry again, though of course the husband can. But during the proceedings, with which a multitude of laymen, both summoned and unsummoned, mix themselves up, the husband often becomes morally pliant, or is induced by cunning to utter the words, whereupon the case at once comes to an end. The phrase "thou art repudiated" is fatally momentous, the mere utterance of it, even in the heat of a quarrel, results in separation, and "thrice repudiated" even in complete divorce (see below). If a person writes these words down and in joke asks a Mohammedan to read them, he absolutely refuses to read them aloud. The asseveration "by repudiation," or stronger "by threefold repudiation," is equivalent to a solemn oath. The greater number of disputes in cases of matrimonial separation arise on account of the children, whom neither the father nor mother would like to part with. They, together with the matter of expense, are what unites most closely the bonds of marriage, otherwise so loose. Up to a certain age, which differs among the various so-called sects of Mohammedans—among the Hana- [595] fites, for instance, being the seventh year, among the Shafaites the second—the child remains with its mother, while the father pays for its support, and in return has the right of seeing it as often as he wishes. Henceforth the father, if he has satisfactorily supported it hitherto, can take the child altogether to himself, and he usually does so if it is a boy.

[587] The divorced wife returns to her parents, who generally soon succeed in finding another settlement for her. In a

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the womenfolk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

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1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

customs like the people in Silwa. The visiting priest who comes yearly to the village is certainly welcome on his arrival, and people flock to him for advice on religious matters. On attending one of these meetings, the writer was struck by the number of questions that those present put to him concerning the details of prayers, e.g. whether one lifts his hand up to his shoulder or up to his ears, how one sits on after prostration, what one might say before and after prayers. Other questions that arose were queries about whether certain sayings or deeds were considered to be religiously approved or disapproved, how and to whom one would make a sacrifice oath, whether visiting saints' tombs is a good thing or not, and so forth.

Village life, on the whole, whether in religious or social spheres, is very ritually and ceremonially conscious, and almost invulnerable on this level. Greeting, hospitality, eating, praying, exchange of social obligations, circumcision, marriage, and dozens of items of life are shrouded with ritual and traditional prescriptions. My informant, Mahmoud, told me that after a sermon given by a preacher coming from the city, who told the villagers that their customs practised on the death of a person were non-Islamic, they took a vow not to practise them any more. Yet the adherence to the oath was made for some six months, after which people gradually relapsed to their traditional ways, with the only exception that women were allowed to follow the deceased as far as the southern end of the village instead of going on to the cemetery as had been the practice hitherto.

The extent of social change on the folkhood of the village could be also examined in the villagers' ideas about sickness and disease which are mixed with ritual and religious beliefs. Disease, it is supposed, can be caused either by failure to fulfil some religious ritual or ceremony, such as a financially able man not performing his pilgrimage, or the failure to give the promised offerings to a saint, or providing a naming ceremony for a new-born baby. If saints are suspected as the cause of the disease, usually a woman known to be the guardian of that particular saint, or upon whom saints descend, would be consulted to tell whether the family has broken or forgotten a sacrificial custom. If no special saint has been offended, then bread could be specially baked and distributed as a 'karama' amongst people after the Friday prayer, asking God to relieve the sick.

Sickness can also be caused by the evil eye, and in such cases a learned man is asked to recite verses from the Koran or write a charm (higab) to be worn by the sick person as a prophylactic safeguard as well as a means of treatment. Certain diseases like paralysis are believed to be caused by the evil red wind emanating from the touch of jinn; an epileptic is also a person who is mounted and obsessed by jinn who usually haunt deserted places, wells, and high spots in the mountains. Curiously enough, tuberculosis is believed to be caused by pretence and social conceit.

Moreover, a sickness is considered as God's test for the endurance and patience of the faithful. As the faithful are always exposed to affliction, their faith in God should never be shaken, and hence their endurance of

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APPENDIX II

1796 The following is the lunar calendar and the main religious events connected with it.

Lunar Months	*Religious Events*
Muharram	First day of the month is celebrated as the beginning of the new year. Tenth occasions a 'Rahmat' meal on ' 'Ashoura'.[1]
Safar	—
Rabi Awwal	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday on the 12th.
Rabi Tani	—
Jamad Awwal	—
Jamad Tani	—
Rajab	A 'Rahmat' meal to commemorate the Prophet's journey from Medina to Jerusalem 'Israi' on 27th.
Shaaban	Meal and prayers on the 14th.
[1785] Ramadan	The month of fasting.
Shawwal	On its first day is the breaking of the fast and the celebration of 'Id Ramadan, first feast.
[1788] Zul Ka'dda	Preparation for pilgrimage.
Zul Hijjah	'Rhamat' meal on the 9th day called 'Arafat'. Tenth celebration of the Great Feast ('Id al Adha).

[1] Ashoura is a Shiite event of lamentation and blood sacrifice to commemorate the death of Husain. In spite of the fact that the villagers are Sunnis (Malikites) they have a special meal to invoke God's mercy on their departed.

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sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt,
778 and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his
531 grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder
[212] being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a
[794] female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the
[782] candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

796 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place
769 in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves
[794] around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their
[788] gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 243, Fig. 140.

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had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, 796
toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing 769
excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all 796
these *mawālid*, and those who 769
sold them attracted a con- 524
siderable number of customers. [531]
These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

[794] [292] [708]

[171]

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Um- 796
bārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet 769
538

[Text continues on p. 255]

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796
769

FIG. 142. MŪLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

[page 254]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the saint Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

796 In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the
769 festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried
[443] on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *zikr* was taking place under the shade
796 of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number
788 of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this
769 religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

796 Close to where this religious performance was taking place was
769 to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here
[529] the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which
[538] listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-
[533] membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145). F 796 769

These *mawâlid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which F [625]

F [291] [342]

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawâlid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance. F [171] C F

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yûsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Mâri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The 346 792

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F C 346 792

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

F C [778]

F C [133]

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

F E 796

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

F C [943] [527]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-'Īd el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their
935 donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while
431 coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram
[782] substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

[764]
[769]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

796 Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in
[782] her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-'Īd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

796 Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of
769 people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-'Īd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar*.

The first day of *Khamasīn*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesīm* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 213.

F they build themselves a suburb on the outskirts of a town,
361 as at Minia for example, it bears exactly the same appearance.

Some distinction may be made between villages according to their relative importance. There are the district capitals (*markaz*), the market towns and the centres of pilgrimage; these are big villages or townlets with more business, more movement and more institutions than the others (bank, court, police station, railway station); but no fellah centre has many of the amenities of a town. At the other end of the scale come detached but still dependent hamlets, such as the '*ezbas* of the big landowners and the Bedouin settlements (*nag'*) on the edges of the cultivation.

F The standard of living is practically invariable every-
511 where, and to study an average village is to know all the rest.
184 Let us choose a village at random and look, before we enter it, for any signs of communal life which can be seen from its outskirts.

F In Europe it is often said that the church building gives
361 its character to the village. In Egypt too the mosque (or
346 the Coptic church) is the largest and most solid building, but there is nothing remarkable about it in point of architecture. Even if it has a minaret or a bell-tower, it gives no special character to the village, for it rarely rises above the poverty and mediocrity of its surroundings.

C
F 95% of the fellaheen are Moslems. There are about a
779 million Copts, 40,000 of whom are Catholics. They live together with the Moslems in the same villages, each group following its own faith.

F The Moslem fellaheen, among whom neither women nor
779 children are counted, observe as faithfully as possible the
771 five fundamental precepts of the Koran: belief in one God, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the pilgrimage. This much at least they know.

F Of their belief in God something will be said later on.
782 Prayers they say after ablutions in the evening, and several
776 times on Friday. When they hear the call of the *muezzin*,
516 they leave the women and children in the fields, and go off to the mosque, or more often to a cleared space used as such, a square of beaten earth at the water's edge surrounded by a low wall. There they pray together, or at least go through the prescribed gestures. Squatting on the ground or on

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

F 782 796 516

a mat, they listen to the *maazûn*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran.

F C 788

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants.

C F 191 198 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian.

F C 785 262

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday.

F 735 782 431

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents.

C F 794 554

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*".

C F [532]

F 778

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of

7

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

● 796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations ([50]).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

coloured language. More often he will relate the exploits of Abu Zeid el-Hilâli and his companions, and the loneliness of his wife 'Aliya, the prowess of 'Antar, or the pleasures of the flesh. Many of these improbable stories contain a core of historical truth, and recall those to which the peasants listened under the Pharaohs. (**) F 533 538

The audience listens enraptured, greeting every point with "Allah! Allah!" or beating time in rhythmic applause to the song. When enthusiasm reaches its peak, caps are torn off and flung into the air. Then the story has to be begun again. F 533

For important occasions such as a wedding, the reception of a public figure, or the eve of a *mûlid*, a band of musicians adds its support. 527 585

The players are untrained, their tunes are simple and obvious, and their orchestration is monotonous, if not discordant. They either improvise variations or play some well-known refrain from memory. Their instruments are the *mizmar*, a shrill-toned bagpipe, the *zummara*, a reed flute, single or double, together with the *urghul* and *salamiya*, which are plucked with the fingers. The music is supported by beating either the *tabl*, a large shallow drum, or the *darabukka*, a kind of tambourine made of a piece of donkeyskin stretched over the mouth of an earthen funnel about a foot wide. All these instruments are of local make, and there is no peasant festivity at which they cannot be heard. F 533 534

The crowd is even denser when other attractions find a place in the programme. There may be jugglers, performing monkeys, or snake-charmers, or perhaps a sham duel between two fellaheen who swing their staves (*nabbûts*) this way and that in attack and defence. F 524 541

Belly dances, puppet shows, and pantomimes (*khawwal*) may still sometimes be found. F 535 536

These entertainments are usually held on the *gurn* and the neighbouring space, or near the Sheikh's tomb on the day of his *mûlid*. They reach the grand scale at those district pilgrimages that annually attract tens of thousands of fellaheen to commemorate, if not to pray to, the holy "patron" on the presumed site of his life and death. There is El-Sayyid El-Bedawi at Tanta, Sidi Abdel Raheem at Qena, Al-Imam Al-Shafei at Old Cairo, and for the Copts Sitti Damiyana, Marie Girgis, and others. (**) c F 796 527

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water
271 that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as
823 not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river
823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

E F 113

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand.

F [586]

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages.

F [162 872]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14.

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

E F [796 527]

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.)

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

113 78. 'Aly Shamsy Pasha, Speech in the Chamber, December 1939.

79. A Village Summer School, article in The Social Workers' Bulletin, May 1938.

80. 'Abdul-Halim Abu-Seif Radi, 7.4.1941.

81. Apostolic Letter to the Mexican Bishops, 28.3.1937; section on the peasantry.

785 796 527 82. The fasting month of Ramadan is succeeded by the month of Shawwal, the first three days of which are a great public holiday, the Lesser Bairam. About two months later comes the other great holiday, the four days of the Great Bairam.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

796 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense.
789 They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the foot-prints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[805] [1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a
[796] sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast
[785] day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

except in Allah ! I charm you and seek to enchant you from my eye and the eye of your mother, and your father, and the eye of the people who "envied" you. I charm you and seek to enchant you even as Mohammed charmed his she-camel. He placed for her fodder, which she tasted. She had been refactory ; she became docile."

Strange to say, I saw an "old wife" who, during the charm, was moving her hand in front of the eyes of the "Envied" and his sides. And she was yawning, and influencing him until he was yawning too. She did not stop this until the "Envied" poured with perspiration and slept during the charm. It is a method somewhat resembling magnetic hypnotism. The truth of the matter is that it suits that ailment, because it is successful, as we said in Part I, page 78, because of electric magnetic influence.

VI

THE CHARM OF 'ĀSHŪRĀ'[1]

AT the new moon of Muḥarram every year you see people going about the streets carrying on their heads salt, or sugar or coriander (*kuzbara*) or some other things. These are called *Raḳwātīya*, from *Raḳwa* a charm. Women and young men invite them to perform this charm. So they enter houses and place the salt and the coriander upon the fire and utter the incantation [p. 18] as follows :

Oh, fine salt ! Oh, chaste substance !
Your mother is free ; your father, fine !
Incense the coverlet that protects you from shoulder pains !
Incense the chicken lest it eat and die !

[1] [The *'Ashūrā'* is a Moslem fast day (voluntary) observed on the tenth of the month Muḥarram. The sacred character of this date has already been referred to above, Part I, p. 84. Tr.]

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

---

(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

1.

Morning Hymn.

939x
[161]

This little hymn was sung very often by our boys, — always in the morning, during the first hours of work.

U-ṣabaḥna 'aṣdin Alla,
'ala bābak, ya kerim, yalla,
'ala bāb min fatah abwabak.
Wa-la ḥaul wa-la 'uwa illā-bak.

In the morning we turn to Allah.
At thy door (we stand), thou gracious one, Allah,
At the door of him, who hath opened thy doors of mercy.
And there is no might and no strength save in thee.

3. The Prophet Mohammed has opened to mortals the doors to Allah. [779]
4. A frequently used formula, founded on a Koran verse. [796]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

×539
775
•796
[769]

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 1—4 describe
[211] the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bab in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu 'atabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḍabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
5 *Yabu bab mezauwa', ya Seiyid!*
Win 'iśt ana lagī-lak, ya Seiyid,
wa'id 'anadilak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
5 Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

1. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 2.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

22.

Swing-Song.

539x
527
857

This song is said to be sung by girls, as they swing at the "great feast". They are teasing friends who are standing near.

The "great feast" ('īd el-kebīr) also designated by the Turkish name Korbân Beirâm, is celebrated about two months and a half after the more important "little feast", which ends the holy fast-month Ramaḍân. At the time of the "great feast", even the poorest must have a piece of meat, for it is celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. [796]

Like all feasts, the "great feast" is celebrated with much noise and merriment. Swings are rarely lacking at the place of the feast.

Ya ḫāi, rīḥet hudāmak
zēi kaḥk el-'īd,
ma'gūm-bi-šēbe u-kafūra
u-samnē gedīd.

Brother, the odor of thy garments
Is like feast-cakes,
Kneaded with wormwood and camphor
And fresh fat.

3. Such strange spices as wormwood and camphor are actually baked in these sweet feast-cakes, which are general favorites (compare No. 20, l. 9). Camphor is put, for instance, into coffee. [263]

[P.24 is blank]

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FRIDAY.

The week is over, and on the eve of Friday the muezzin proclaims, by a variation in words and melody, the day of the Lord, which begins at this hour, and consequently on Thursday evening. But neither now nor yet next morning does any change in the physiognomy of the working day manifest itself. The retail-dealer sits in his shop, the artisan knocks and hammers, the broker shouts, the countryman brings his fruits as at other times, it is but a very few that have even changed their clothes. Towards mid-day the muezzin calls repeatedly, not as at other times only once, and now the town assumes a remarkably deserted appearance, in the streets and market-places only idle boys make a stir, the whole grown-up male population hurry to the mosques. Here, sitting in rows upon the ground, the congregation listen to the exhortations of the uneducated lay-preacher in the pulpit, who but a short time ago sat in his shop and wove or worked at his trade of tailor or carpenter, while the attendants on a platform chant formulas in confirmation of his words. A short half hour and the whole service, the sermon of the preacher, his official supplication, and the genuflections of the worshippers, are at an end. The remainder of the day is also devoted to ordinary occupations, the Prophet having so permitted. Only the schools and the public offices remain closed. 796 ●

As with the Friday so with many other days held sacred by the Mohammedans; the uninitiated is often made aware of them only by means of slices of bread and butter, which a friendly neighbour sends to the house, or, as at the Ashoora, by a kind of cosmopolitan cake, consisting of flour, wheat, barley, walnuts, hazel-nuts, raisins, rose-perfume, cinnamon, ginger, and all other possible fruits and spices. 796 262 [621]

RAMADAN.

But now comes the month of fasting—the sacred *Ramadan*. On the evening of the day preceding the first of this month 796 [785]

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●796 the people begin to be in an active and excited state. Numerous groups collect in the open spaces and scan the
[821] western horizon to see if they can discover the new moon; since it is only on the testimony of a Moslim that he has seen the new moon—though he may be a man of no account whatever—that the festival can begin. Even the most accurate astronomical calculation, so far as this is possible, has not the same authority. The rising and setting of the new as well as of the full moon are not regulated exactly by those of the sun, since the synodic or lunar month contains 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes, and the time of conjunction, when moon, earth, and sun are in a right line, happens at very different hours of the day in different months. The time at which the new moon, so eagerly looked for by the Mohammedans, first reappears after astronomical new-moon also depends upon the season of the year; it is seen earliest in the spring months, for reasons depending upon the position of the moon's path relatively to that of the sun. An astronomer says that he has not seen the moon earlier than forty hours after nor later than twenty-seven hours before the astronomical new-moon, but that by a combination of all favourable circumstances this may even happen within twenty-four hours, and travellers maintain that they have seen the old moon on the morning and the new moon on the evening of the same day. To these considerations one is led who every year looks on, while the Moslimin thus eagerly and for the most part uselessly watch the heavens. Since the official calendar pays no attention to this important
[805] method of determining Ramadan, it simply gives, now to one month, now to another, thirty or twenty-nine days in order to make up the total of 354. Accordingly, when the first of Ramadan occurs in the calendar, it is by no means certain whether at the same time the new moon is visible. The more scientific among the heads of the province often actually cause the fast to be altered a day till the moon is perfectly visible in the evening sky. When Ramadan falls in winter, at which season the sky is often clouded, and in high latitudes, where it is gloomy for weeks at a time, the determina-

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tion of Ramadan is attended with still greater difficulties. 796
In modern times, however, the inhabitants of the provinces are informed by telegraph from the capital, when the new [206] moon became visible there, and that generally at a time before even the most sharp-sighted among the country people could descry anything.

So soon as it is believed to be certain that the new moon 785
has appeared, in towns where there are cannon a loud report 796
proclaims the commencement of the fast, and from this moment [207] the Moslim becomes quite a changed man. Henceforward he leads more of a nocturnal life. In the morning during the fast only a few persons belonging to the lowest classes are seen, as in the large towns of Europe; porters, water-carriers, day-labourers, ass and camel drivers, go to their occupations; the children, who are not expected to fast, and the infidels have possession of the streets; the markets and [243] cafés are deserted, the shops and offices shut. Gradually a person here and there rises, and, with eyelids weighed down by sleep, crawls languidly along, and the shops begin to open. Such things as are absolutely necessary are bought, but trade remains extremely dull, and when a person asks to see some goods the shop-keeper sulkily lays aside the Koran, which he had been conning over to himself aloud, moving his head to and fro, and scarcely deigns to give the customer a single glance. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast" (Mat. vi. 16).

In the forenoon nature makes herself felt as being deprived of her proper night's rest; from noon onwards hunger and thirst also demand to be appeased. Not a bite, not a sup, not an odour must enter the body that is clad in the armour of fasting. The most exquisite dainties would not be able to seduce a fasting Moslim. When he passes an infidel who is smoking he carefully shuts both mouth and nose, and it is not many years yet since any one who dared to smoke before a fasting Moslim would have suffered for it. Unless he is very unwell (and then he is freed from fasting) a Mohammedan takes no medicine during the day, he even refuses to

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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[702] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[504] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a
[735] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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Thus strengthened it is possible for the Moslim in his nocturnal devotions to perform the twenty systems of reverential bendings (*rûk'a*) now demanded instead of the usual three. On the streets there is not to be sure a surging of people up and down, and there are also but a few of the dealers or artisans' shops opened, but a bustle and traffic at other times unusual on the street at night may still be noticed; numerous sellers of fruits, and especially of confectionery, have lighted up their stations, and, till far into the night, cry their wares, now so largely patronised by young and old; the café's are all well attended, and if one pleases he can now get here besides the black bitter coffee sweetened coffee or a cup of ginger water with sugar, and sometimes also sherbet of rose-water, tamarinds, raisins, St. John's bread, or, lastly, a drop of liquorice juice. A "poet" relates to the by-standers the deeds of the hero Abuset or Antar, sometimes bursting out into song, and accompanying himself by scraping on a one stringed fiddle. In another café a master of music twangs with all the rapidity of a virtuoso the innumerable treble strings of a kind of guitar, and draws from it those weak jingling tones which recall to us our boyhood and the time when we received our first music lessons on the dingy-keyed piano of a country schoolmaster. There the guests listen to a story-teller; with voluble tongue and poetic verse he describes the enchanted princes and princesses, the excursions of the disguised Haroun al Rashid and his viziers, the man-eating monsters, the Jewish enchanters, which form the material for every one of those tales, the number of which is far more than 1001. The narrative is extempore —purely from memory.

In the houses matters proceed in the same way or even with more liveliness. Everybody who has a house to offer "prepares a couch" (*yfrish*) in order to receive guests, and treats them to coffee. On such evenings the merriest humour prevails, and at no time the whole year through does the Moslim appear in such a hearty vein as on the nights of Ramadan. He goes from one house to another and makes a round of calls upon his friends and acquaintances. In

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796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[208] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
285 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shawal, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[208] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [298]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [560]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [443]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]
A [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analys]

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796 while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him
[169] or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony
[782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer must have his
[262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of
[188] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The
[174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for
796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Kenah; it is for Upper Egypt
[184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast
[178] of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

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or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assemble from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their dearing to be visible to a distance.

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000 their daring to be visible to a distance. The people on the
541 festival ground take up their positions in a number of circles, in the centre of which performers of all sorts show themselves. Here a silver-haired wise woman or female sheikh
[538] sings rousing religious hymns; there the listening people get
[231] stories of genii and of heroes told to them; here the monkey-keeper puts his red-buttocked baboon through his performances, making him show "the maiden's sleep and that of the old wife, the walk of the thief," &c.; there a group of impro-
[538] visators are bawling and clapping their hands, ready at a moment's notice to make a verse for and upon every new
[522] comer. Elsewhere a buffoon is giving amusement by his
536 gestures in theatrical representations, and his wit, which is coarse, generally obscene, and exceedingly personal. A jug-
[789] gler stuffs his mouth full of cotton and draws out endless ribbons instead. These he winds up together, then shuts them into his magical box, opens the box, and discovers it to be empty. He then summons the magic spirit to his assistance by
[231] blowing a large shell (generally that of *Tritonium variegatum*), opening the box again and a large serpent crawls out of it. In the meantime he goes through all sorts of antics with his boys and assistants. One of these robs him, but the thief is discovered and condemned to death. The juggler bares the culprit's belly, into which he forcibly thrusts a dagger, and in order that death may be certain, he withdraws and inserts it several times. A stream of blood spurts out, and the performance is too real and horrible for some spectators. The corpse is covered up, the magic shell is blown, the spirit awakes the boy, who gradually moves his limbs, and soon jumps about as merry as before. The handle of the dagger, as the police have learned, is hollow, and the blade is pushed up into it when brought into contact with the skin, while at the same time a bladder applied to the dagger gives out a stream of blood-red beet-root juice.

●796 On the morning of the festival itself, as upon all the great general festivals of Islam, town and people are decorated and dressed out, work is entirely at a stand-still, and the throng upon the main streets leading to the tomb of the saint is

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immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels hung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels [534] bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the seraii of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in ● 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash themselves with the *gharghurah Ayub*. Maunday Thursday [783] has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath [796]
of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this [778]
day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye- [826]
powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, [757]
a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the [789]
coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) [574]
these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals [805]
are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before [788]
onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of [943]
coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces [252]
and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shawiyya*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent [62] [526]

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796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health 753 must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, 796 the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then [796] wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the 803 ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 537
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533]
while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534]
under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838]
the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmah* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 799
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosuf*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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779 curses and threatenings against unbelievers, but often also deeply moral ideas and regulations, and wonderful poetry. The statutes of the Koran, the religion of Islam, are apt to lead adherents of the faith to hypocrisy and fanaticism, and interpose the barrier of fatalism and superstition to effort and progress (this, however, is contested by enlightened Mohammedans); but this religion, more, perhaps, than any other, has acted as a bond of union, has formed and united nations together, and has been able to preserve the old patriarchal virtues up to the present day, of which respect for old age, hospitality, and to some extent also female virtue, are the most to be commended.

Another religious reading is the *mulid*, that is, the genealogy of the Prophet, in which the forefathers of the latter, [173] [796] from Adam onwards, are enumerated and their praises sung.

786 Among the favourite devotional observances are those well-
796 known religious gymnastical exercises called *zikr*. Those taking part in them form a circle or a line. At one end the leader (*mansheed*) of the singing seats himself, and sings an ode, which at one time is deeply poetical and religious, at another, through images and similes, like the Song of Solomon, becomes lascivious and indeed obscene. The people sit with their legs crossed, and keep time to the melody of the singer with an uninterrupted "Allah," at first slow, solemn, in a deep bass, turning the head alternately right and left. Gradually the time and the movement of the head become quicker, the upper part of the body takes part in the movements of the head, the "Allah" becomes an "A A Allah." They then assume a kneeling posture and move the body madly about, still keeping time, however, and each like his neighbour. In the third stage the company of pious gymnasts rise to their feet, and their movements become more and more frantic. They pant, they moan, they groan, their voices sound hoarser, they stutter, they yelp out, "Ha, Ha, Allah," and thus for hours the frenzy continues. One or other of them is now sure to drop, becoming giddy, or being [787] attacked by spasms and convulsions. This, however, attracts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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little attention, since the person possessed or "disguised" (*melbûs*) will recover of himself, or if it lasts too long, somebody shouts into his ear the Mohammedan confession of faith. As soon as he can repeat it in his turn the evil spirit leaves him, and he is again an ordinary man as before. 786 796 787

ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE WOMEN.

While during the weeks before a circumcision or a marriage the men are thus spending the nights in pleasures and amusements, the women also get up *fantasieh* in their own manner among themselves. They meet together every day (seldom by night) in the house where the entertainments are given, where they sing, beat the darabuka or hand-drum and the tambourine, and dance too, it may be, like the professional dancing-girls, rattling their castanets. This for the most part, however, is only done by women of the lower ranks, those of the higher listen and look on. Men must not be spectators, not even the master of the house. The professional singers (*almeh*), more virtuous than the dancing-girls, generally exhibit their powers only in the harem, and the men listen to their charming songs through the latticed windows of the women's apartments. 527 [534] [535] [533]

On the occasion of festivities among people of lower rank, especially country people, a man, on the other hand, may witness a public dance of women, veils, however, being worn. The scene is the court-yard or other open space. Late at night, after the evening prayer, the male spectators who choose to come seat themselves in a circle or semicircle, a fire being kept burning near by in order to heat coffee, to furnish lights for pipes, and occasionally to dry the kettle-drums rendered damp by the night-dew. On one side of the circle stand, thronging closely together, the ballad singers or improvvisatori, who at the command of a leader repeat for hours on end a verse manufactured by himself, always in the same melody, for instance:— [533]

> "She (the loved one) has made me a cap
> Handsome as the castle of Mohammed Ali."

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhdar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

/85 cont'd/

The Kūdiya and her followers stay overnight. About 10.00 A.M. the next morning the possessed woman takes a bird or fowl in her hand, or rides on a goat, sheep or camel, thus establishing physical contact with the animal to be sacrificed, then she walks seven times round the offering table. If she is too ill to do so, the Kūdiya will pass the birds or fowl seven times over the patient's head. During this procedure the drums are beaten, incense burnt, and "Sagharid", i.e. joyful shouts, uttered by the women. They are produced by putting the tongue between the lips, moving it rapidly and uttering shrill vibrating shouts. 755 782 [801] [198]

Then the Kūdiya or one of her assistants kills the bird or other sacrificial animal near the table, the animal's blood is carefully collected in a porcelain or ceramic plate, into which the amulets and a round silver piece are placed. The silver piece bears on one side the following inscription: "Due to the permission of the daughter of the king of the earth." On the other side is written: "Oh my masters be content with me!" This silver piece is called "Eia-El-A'qd" or pact, i.e. treaty between the possessed person and the spirit. The patient will then be smeared with blood on the aching parts. The sacrificed animals are cooked, with the exception of their intestines, heart and liver. 751 755 782 789

In the afternoon the patient is bathed wearing amulets and jewelry. She then enters the hall in a majestic procession while the music plays and sits down beside the offering table. The hall is well prepared; all furniture is cleared away, mats are put on the floor and cushions placed along the wall for the guests. The Kūdiya and the musical band sit near the center wall. In the middle of the room is the offering table. When the patient sits down to it, the Kūdiya uncovers it. Three, five or seven ladies who had performed a Zar before, give the patient three pieces of bread with sour milk and one piece of cooked intestines. The patient eats this while the women will say: " 'Afia we bourhan" (health and proof) (13). The offerings 755 782 [801] [262]

(13) It means apparently: "You have fulfilled your obligations towards the spirits, let this Zar contribute towards your recovery and be it a proof of your loyalty."

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46.

539x
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Ṣābiḥ mesāfir, gā ḥabībi yewadda'ni,
biki u-ball el-maḥārim. 'ultê-lo: lē ya'ni?
'al-li: u''ud ḥadāye telāt sā'āt tesallīni.
Walla, furā' el-ḥabāib ṣa'b, ya rabbi!

In the morning, as I was starting on a journey, my beloved came to take leave of me.
Her handkerchiefs were drenched with tears. I said to her: "Wherefore?"
She said: "O stay with me three hours, that thou mayest comfort me!"
Truly, the parting of lovers is grievous, O my Lord!

3. "Three", is used in such songs elsewhere also, as a round number; compare No. 45. [801]

47.

Sympathy.

In a gentleman's garden strange workmen are busied. In the centre of the garden is a fountain, and the ḥarîm (harem), in which the ladies sit, is close to the garden. Evening is approaching.

Ḍill il-ʿaṣāri māl ʿal-fasʾīye
u-ramaš baʿēno: waʾʾaf el-gamʿīye!
Ya-l-arbaʿīn, yalli ʿala-l-ʾullīye,
mōt el-ṛarīb fil-bilād ḥaṭīye.
Ya ʿišt-ana! ʿal-ṛarīb, yaḥwāti,
abki beḥurʾa wed-demāʿ teraši.

"The afternoon shadow inclines toward the fountain
And says with its eye: 'Let the laborers cease!'
O, ye forty ladies, who sit in your chamber,
The death of a stranger in the land is a sin."
"Oh, how sad am I! For the stranger, O, my sisters,
I bitterly weep and my tears flow!"

1—4. One of the laborers speaks: "Do not let us be tormented to death! You, too, would have to answer for this sin". Forty is frequently used as a round number. Compare the beginning of the story of the "Ours de cuisine" in Spitta's Contes arabes modernes (p. 12).

5—6. Are the words of a lady to the others. The translation "flow" is Maḥmûds.

52.

Reward of Politeness.

Like the German proverb: "One need but carry hat in hand to travel safely throughout the land." 539x 576

In reading this picturesque description of the reward of politeness, do not fail to remember that the person speaking is a poor, Egyptian peasant earning only his two and a half piastres a day. (About twelve cents). [4[illegible]]

Ṣabāḥ el-ḫēr, ya lamme!
Ṣabbaḥ el-ward ʿala-z-zēn.
Ya min ṣabbaḥ, saddē dēno,
wištara, we-lā baʾāš ʿalē dēn,
5 *wištara ʿabd balfēn,*
yistāhil rukāb el-ḫēl.

Good morning to you assembled here!
The roses wished the glorious one good morning.
He who wishes a good morning, wipes out his debts,
And buys and has no debts, [467]
5 And buys a black slave for two thousand, [435]
Who is worthy to ride upon horses. [554]

2. "The glorious one" is the Prophet. With this greeting of the roses, compare No. 6, l. 7 and No. 7, l. 2.

3. That is, at an exceptionally high price. The coin is not indicated; 2000 is frequently used as a large, round number. [801]

6. After the manner of a gentleman.

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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth 846 852 into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his 553 mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only 551 personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This [178] custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among [582] themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with 846 the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured 852 over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is [801] a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and [783] mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or 527 a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every [524] form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and [779] other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy. /81 /83

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow. [803]

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the climate might explain this. But what can explain the apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race? /81 /82

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries. [142 839]

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954

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should be declined by saying, 'God compensates me in a better way'.

The following three instances are concrete situations showing the working of the social structure. The first is the installation of a new corn mill by all the clans in the village to bring to an end the monopoly of the already existing privately owned mill. The rough estimates were divided into 24 kirats (parts), each section responsible for collecting the money equivalent to its 12 kirats.[1] In the second process of distribution, each section divides its share amongst the clans, and the head of each clan is responsible for collecting his share from family heads; by dividing his kirats into sahms, the people of his clan could buy a minimum of one-tenth of a sahm. No section or clan could be helped or its shares be taken by another. It was interesting to listen to the village crier calling out the names of the clans and the two sections, to induce haste in collecting the money.

Such procedure was followed for repairing the village mosque. In this case the question was not so much that of collecting money, as of recruiting the men to bring stone, water, straw, etc., for the repairs; and this was also dealt with on the same structural basis.

The third instance was the allocation of new building land to the village, which was also first divided into two sections; then each section was divided into equal parts amongst its clans, which in turn had to divide its share among the families.

The system of village government reflects a combination of central authority agents and the village social organization. The village head is an official called 'Omda' who used to be elected from a list of five people who own not less than 10 feddans. Two years ago, the law was changed and the Omda is now elected from amongst thirteen people who own enough land to make them eligible. The job is unpaid, and it is reckoned as a privilege to be elected. The Omda's seniority is something like the medieval *primus inter pares*. He represents the village on official occasions. One of his traditional and honorary functions is to receive guests, travellers, and government officials in his guest house. Silwa has also two unpaid 'Sheikhs' each representing one of the two sections of the village and thus commonly referred to as 'Sheikh hissa'; these are also elected from amongst those who are eligible (minimum requirement was 5 feddans, now being relaxed). The Omda and the two sheikhs settle the disputes that arise in the village, usually with the aid of Arab councils, or with the help of people whom they select on different occasions. Each sheikh is primarily concerned with the problems of his section (hissa).

The central government is represented by the police headquarters with a police officer or constable in charge and policemen and ghafeers. While the policemen are always from outside the village, the ghafeers are villagers, put up usually from different clans, acting as the Omda's messengers, as well as the local agents between the village and the police headquarters.

[1] The feddan has 24 kirats, and each kirat 12 sahms.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

bone and the eye-lids were swollen and distended, and the eye-ball wound was violently inflamed, veiling the cornea. When I asked him the reasons for the ailment he hesitated somewhat in answering, so I repeated the question and he answered as follows: "There was a cataract in my eye so I went to such and such a doctor." (He mentioned a Greek who used to live in a small tavern in the neighbourhood of the new vegetable market, who claimed a knowledge of medicine for the eyes. The date was Ramaḍān, 1311 = 1893). "He placed ammonia in my eye, and said that after three times it would eat away the granular lids (*laḥmīya*) from the eye, and lo, I am as you see!"

So I subjected him to the treatment counteracting inflammation by means of suitable drops until these ailments were removed. And I declare that if that man had delayed and had not hastened of his own accord to a qualified doctor, his eye would have become a prey to the voracity of the ammonia.

XIV

MĀNASTIR[1] AND WOMEN

I was one day sitting in the shop of one of the druggists in the *wikāla* of *Abū Zaid* in Cairo, when there came to him an old woman, and asked him if he had any *mansir* (sic). So I interrupted by asking her what benefit it had. (This was after I knew that she meant *mānastir*). She said: My son, this is of benefit to women whose bodies are weak because of sleeplessness and disease or irritation. When "the bead of the cow" [see page 76] and *ḳirtās* and *mufattaḳa* [see page 77] are of no avail there is brought to her *mansir* to the weight of an oke.[2] (She means that the weight of the *mānistir* creates in the woman who takes it, fat to the amount of an oke.)

[1] [See above, p. 96.]

[2] [*Ūḳḳa* or *uḳḳa*, the Turkish pound in general use in Egypt, and usually termed *oke* by Europeans. It is equivalent to 2¾ lb. Tr.]

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To the End of the World!

99.

×539 [551] Shamme is a girl's name.

Ya Šamme, ḥāli, ya Šamme,
ya-msauwaḥāni, ya Šamme,
ya-mgauwi'āni, ya Šamme,
ya-m'aṭṭašāni, ya Šamme,
5 *ḥāli, ya Šamme!*
Larāḥ eš-šām 'ala šān Šamme!

O Shamme, what has become of me, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest restlessly wander about, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest hunger, Shamme,
Whom thou lettest thirst, Shamme,
5 What has become of me, Shamme!
Verily, I would go to Syria for the sake of Shamme!

[804] 6. I would go to the end of the world for her sake! Syria is often used for a long distance. Compare No. 100.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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crops have been adopted, besides vegetables and clover (berseem). During the last five years, persons who had sufficient land have started to grow sugar-cane and cotton with these two crops. This widened cropping has been due to the need for more cash crops, and to the increase in transport facilities for selling sugar-cane and cotton. On the whole, however, the village produces mainly subsistence crops, which form the basis of the villagers' bread intake.

The agricultural activities in the village are regulated by the time-honoured Ancient Egyptian calendar which is now known as the Coptic Calendar, and this co-exists with the two other calendars, the Moslem (Hijri) and the European (Miladi).[1] These three calendars are used by the villagers in different circumstances. The Coptic Calendar is the oldest in use, followed by the Hijri or lunar one, whilst the European has been adopted in Egypt since 1875. While the Coptic Calendar, based on the solar system, is mainly used to regulate and co-ordinate the agricultural activities, the Hijri Calendar, based on the lunar system, fixes the religious and ceremonial feasts; the European is mainly used for activities connected either with legal procedures or other official business. More often than not, especially with the older generation, the European dates are changed into either the Coptic or lunar dates.[2]

The methods and implements of work are more or less the same traditional ones known to have been used by the Egyptian farmer for thousands of years. The 'touriah' or the 'fass' is the indispensable implement to any farmer. It is a kind of hoe which can be turned to many uses, such as breaking up clods of earth, digging furrows, scraping fertilizer clay from the hills, and so forth. For ploughing, he uses the Egyptian plough called 'mihrat', dragged by one or two yoked cows. The water-wheel and the 'shadoof' are used at present only for irrigating the small parcels of land which are higher than the water level in the canals. Such plots of land are very few, compared with large areas which are easily irrigated by merely opening the runnel between the field and the canal, which is filled by the water raised by the pumping machine. The farmer also uses the 'garraffa', which is a beam of wood or a trunk of a palm-tree, to level down land after breaking up the clods with the hoe.[3]

In these methods of work, farm labour is extensive rather than intensive. Work is spread over almost the whole year. Of course, every farmer knows that more effort and concentration are called for in the two periods, that of preparing the soil and sowing of the seeds, and that of harvesting. Again, the gathering of fertilizer and manure is an equally important and arduous task, though more spread out during the period of two or four months for

[1] The Hijri Calendar starts with the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in A.D 622.

[2] See Appendix II for a note on the use of lunar and Coptic months in the village with the agricultural and religious activities connected with them.

[3] For methods and implements of farm work in Egypt see Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellaheen*, Chapter IV, Cairo (n.d.).

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it
269 was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while
[805] those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is
852 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three
304 and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the
[264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Siwa
COPTS MR10

Appendix Two

THE COPTIC AND THE LUNAR CALENDAR

FC 805

According to the Coptic Calendar the year is divided into twelve months of thirty days each, with the addition of five inter-calary days at the end of three successive years and six at the end of the fourth, and these days are called 'nasee' (prolongation).[1] As this calendar indicates the position of the earth in its orbit, it corresponds to the seasonal climatic changes around which farm work generally revolves. Though very

Coptic Calendar	*Corresponding European dates*	*Lunar Calendar (Higri). These months fall some eleven days earlier every solar year*
Toot	10th or 11th September[2]	Muharram
Babah	10th or 11th October	Safar
Hatoor	9th or 10th November	Rabi Awwal
Kiyahk (kiyah)	9th or 10th December	Rabi Tani
Toobah	8th or 9th January	Jamad Awwal
Amsheer	7th or 8th February	Jamad Tani
Baramhat	9th March	Rajab
Baramoudah	8th April	Shaaban
Bashans	8th May	Ramadan
Baoonah	7th June	Shawwal
Abeeb	7th July	Zul Ka'dda
Misri	6th August	Zul Hijjah

[1] Some of the Coptic Calendar months are certainly derived from names of ancient Egyptian deities, and this may be taken to indicate that this Calendar is older than the Coptic Church which still uses it to regulate its ecclesiastical year. The Coptic calendar starts from the year A.D. 284, the first year of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's reign, who persecuted the Christians in Egypt, and in commemoration of this event the Coptic Church adopted this year called 'The Year of the Martyrs' as the starting point for its calendar.

[2] Toot 1st begins on 11th September next to a Coptic leap year, or, when in the European Calendar, the following year is a leap year.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa
Copts MR10

few city-dwellers, as most of the products of the modern schools, are seldom acquainted with the names of these months, their functional importance is obvious to the greater part of the Egyptian rural population.

For the village boys, the memorizing of these month-names is greatly helped by the descriptive rhyming phrases that connect them with such significant climatic changes or agricultural events. The table opposite shows the Coptic months and the corresponding dates of the European calendar, as well as the Lunar calendar.

The following are the rhyming phrases connected with the Coptic months. It is to be noticed that they are connected either with the climatic conditions or with wheat in winter, or a kind of millet (different from the one grown after perennial irrigation was introduced) called 'damiri' and which used to be grown in autumn, lasting for two months.

Toot:

He is a fool who expects flood in Toot.

Babah:

If the millet's cob is not fully ripe in this month, not much harvest is to be expected.

Hatoor:

Hatoor calls the cold to commence.

Kiyah:

Compels the barking dog to sleep.[1]

Toobah:

In Toobah my ankle has never been wetted by water.[2]

Amsheer:

The first ten of Amsheer makes one's skin shiver (chopped).

Baramhat:

One can enter the field and get corn (corn begins to ripen).

Baramoudah:

The corn is gathered into heaps.

Bashans:

The chaff is taken away from the sun (loaded home).

Baoonah:

Full of hardship, and it is not advisable to eat eggs or fish (due probably to the excessive heat).

Abeeb:

One does not find it difficult to get dates.

Misri:

Between Misri and Abeeb, send they joy-cries, O beloved (the peak of the Nile flood). This applies, of course, to the days of the basin irrigation,

[1] One of the boys added that in Kiyah the sleeping dog brings his head nearer to his tail.

[2] This is the period of drought called 'gafaf' during which the government allows no water to remain in the canals so that they may be cleaned out; thus water is not available for irrigation.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa
COPTS MR10

APPENDIX II

when the land used to be flooded with the water of the Nile during this period.[1]

Thus these phrases connected with the Coptic months contain some of the community's wisdom related to its technical activities, food consumption and indications of weather changes. It is worth noting that while there are no fixed dates in the Coptic Calendar for any specific agricultural activities, the latter are carried out within a certain time-limit, such as the beginning of a month or second week in a month or towards the end or before beginning of such and such a month, and so forth.

The following is a seasonal calendar for the various types of farm work as regulated by the Coptic Calendar.

Coptic Months	*Agricultural Activities*
Toot	*The Winter Crop (Shitwi)* Either fallow land or early harvested millet: during the first ten days of the month land is sown with clover (berseem).
Babah	Sowing of wheat and barley (during the first ten days). First irrigation of beans and clover.
Hatoor	First irrigation of wheat and barley called 'cleaning irrigation'. Cutting clover before irrigation. Irrigation of beans.
Kiyah	Second irrigation of wheat and barley after distributing fertilizer. Cutting of clover for the second time.[1] Irrigation of beans and clover.
Toobah	Third irrigation of wheat, with fertilizer only for the weak section. Third irrigation of barley. Third cutting of clover. Irrigation of clover and beans.

[1] Clover is cut four times, at intervals of thirty days.

At the season called the *gaffaf*, in January [21], double 312
gangs are to be seen working with their hands, one on the [805]
bank, the other down in the canal bed. Those below pull
up the clods of mud and weeds and throw them to those
on the bank, who catch them and fling them yet further
aside.

In order that this canal system may do its work and the 312
water reach the field, the fellah has to make a network of 461
runnels which will bring the water to his crops. He is cease- 241
lessly occupied in cleaning and maintaining these smaller
channels.

When the turn comes for his field to receive its water—
five days out of ten in flood time, and six days out of eighteen
at low Nile — the fellah stays up night after night in order
to lose none of his water ration.

When the water level is high he watches it flow through
the channels, and has only to clear away any obstacles.
But the water is at low level for 50 to 200 days a year, accord-
ing to the different regions, and then he has to raise it by
hand. Here again he has no modern machinery, but uses the
simplest apparatus, as old as the history of Egypt.

When the water level is only about two feet below his
field, he has two ways of raising it to the thirsty soil. The
first way has now become almost obsolete.

FIRST METHOD

Two men stand face to face on a ledge cut in the bank 241
at water level. With four hempen or palm-fibre ropes they 312
support a wide shallow vessel about 18 ins. in diameter and
10 ins. deep. It is usually made of light basket-work and
more or less waterproof.

Their first movement is to bend slightly down, turning
towards the water, then dip their basket and fill it. With a
second movement they straighten themselves, turn to the
field, and, raising the vessel by a simultaneous movement of
their forearms, empty it out into the mouth of the irrigation
channel.

This work, which is performed with clockwork regularity,
brings into play mainly the muscles of the trunk and the
arms. It is very fatiguing and the strongest men cannot
bear it for more than three hours at a time. Accordingly [461]
two pairs work turn and turn about.

241 This 'leaven of the land' has still to be put to the soil.
242 Twenty times a day the donkey, laden with great panniers
292 or sacks and driven by the fellah's son, carries the manure
293 to the field and goes back to reload. There are no carts or barrows for this work, and the distances are often great. The farmer lays down the manure generously, whether it be natural humus or chemical fertiliser, and packs it by hand round the plant to be encouraged.

Getting in the Crops

461 All this attention is paid to the soil in order that it may yield its fruits. It follows that the fellah's work must continue from seed-time till harvest. The days are gone when he could go away after sowing and return in a few months' time to gather the crop. The struggle for life has become continuous and unrelenting. Since the introduction of cotton and the establishment of perennial irrigation, the fellah has no slack season and is always tending some crop or other.

241 The crops follow a system of rotation covering a period
805 of two or three years. Taking cotton first, the succession
221 will be as follows:

February-October	Cotton
November-May	Wheat, berseem or barley
May-June	(Partly fallow)
June-November	Maize or rice
December-February	Berseem
April-October	Cotton
November-May	Winter cereals or berseem
May-November	Maize (or fallow)
November-March	Berseem or winter cereals
March-June	(Partly fallow)
June-October	Maize or rice
November-March	Berseem

This calendar of crop rotation is observed with but little variation everywhere in the country, according to the need and experience of the farmer. I have translated it into Gregorian months; but the fellaheen keep to the Coptic Calendar, which is based on the Nile flood and goes back to ancient times. It begins with the month of *Tût* (September), in which the Nile reaches its highest level, and divides the solar year into twelve months. There is a series of Arabic
[538] proverbs deriving originally from Pharaonic Egypt, which

assign to each month its proper task. Wheat, which at that time was the main crop, is frequently mentioned, but the new-fangled cotton not at all [24].

This same calendar also regulates the Coptic ecclesiastical year, for when Christianity came to Egypt it made no change in the existing customs. The reckoning begins from A.D. 284, the first year of Diocletian's reign, called 'The Year of the Martyrs'. In actual fact, the great persecutions took place in A.D. 304.

Moslems, on the other hand, start from the *hegira*, or Flight of the Prophet (622 A.D.), and count in lunar months.

Since 1875, Egypt has officially employed the Gregorian Calendar, which is gradually penetrating everywhere. The Government has not kept the ancient Egyptian names for the months, nor has it translated the Roman names. It has simply taken over their popular adaptations as follows: - *yanayer, febrayer, mâris, abrîl, myo, yûnyo, yûlyo, oghostos* and so on. The Ministry of Agriculture works by this calendar to the exclusion of the other two, and so, if not actually used by all the fellaheen, it is understood by most of them.

At this point it will be convenient to describe the principal crops of contemporary Egypt, which are also those at which most of the fellaheen work, namely cotton, which is the main source of the country's wealth; maize and wheat, which provide its daily bread; and *berseem*, the fodder of its cattle. Of the rest we shall say only a word or two in passing.

A. THE "GARDENING" OF THE COTTON PLANT

Cotton was not unknown to the Ancient Egyptians. Some fabrics of Pharaonic times seem to be woven of cotton thread, and Pliny mentions its use. Its development in Egypt for industrial purposes took place in the mid-nineteenth century after the experiments of Jumel. Perennial irrigation, introduced about the same time, together with the increase of the population, and the advantageous openings on the English market, very soon made cotton the principal crop of the country. The world crisis of 1930, which led to a slump in cotton, forced the Egyptian Government to restrict it to a quarter of the total cultivated area. Despite

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

791 he had made up his mind to travel on the morrow to the Nile Valley. Then my heart was aflutter at this news, and I begged him to delay his journey until after the morrow, until I had given him my cash to double. He demurred a little, then after my much pleading, he consented at last. So I handed him all my wealth, the profits of fifteen years, four hundred pounds. He took it and disappeared, and did not return from that time."

LI

THE SHE-MULE OF THE THRONE OR OF THE TENTH (BAGHLAT-AL-'ARSH AU AL-'ASHR)

796 989 THERE is nothing more extraordinary than this nonsense. They say that on the night of the twenty-seventh of the month Rajab, or according to others on the night of the *tenth* of the month Muḥarram,[1] as can be gathered from its name, there is to be seen a black she-mule which goes round all the cultivated districts, with a saddle-bag full of gold on her back, and, above the saddle-bag, the head [p. 101] of a slave severed from its trunk. They say that whoever chances upon her, must take what goods are in the saddle-bag and place instead barley for the mule. For this reason the silly ones amongst the country folk spend all their nights awake on the look out for the footprints of the she-mule.

An old man of advanced age (one of those who still trust in this error but who told his story after the manner of a jest) said to me: I was sitting along with three of my companions at the house of a friend of ours in the middle of the road, on the night appointed for the passing of the mule. (It is said that she passes along the best path.) We determined upon spending the whole night in watching. When we were in the last third

[805] [196] [185] [1] [The tenth day of al-Muḥarram, the first month of the Moslem year, has a sacred significance amongst the faithful. It is the *'Ashūrā*, or voluntary fast day observed by the *sunnis*, or orthodox Moslems, while on the same day the *shi'as*, or sectarians of Islam, commemorate the fatal conflict at Kerbela, when the Prophet's grandson Ḥusain was killed (in A.D. 680).]

23.

Enough of Play!

×539 861 The mothers have difficulty every evening, in inducing the children, who play in the streets until late in the evening, to come home to supper.

A child who is sent out to get the others, speaks:

Ya lāʿibîn kull el-lēle,
iʿaššu u-taʿālu!
Win mā ǧētûš il-lēle,
laḥaddifkum bi-ʾulʾēle,
5 *simm el-fār*
miʿ el-ʿaṭṭār.
[Iḫbaṭ ya ṭār
kull el-lēle!]

You, who play all night,
Come and have your supper!
And if you do not come this evening,
I shall throw a clod at you!
5 Mouse-poison
Is (to be had) at the grocer's!
[534] [Beat, tambourine,
The whole night through].

[805] 1. Night begins at sunset. Lēle, "night", often designates, therefore, our evening.
5, 6 I might poison you!
7, 8 May have been taken from some other song.

33.

×539 For the peasant, the possession of a watch is an unheard-
● 805 of luxury. He can reckon the time of day by the position
461 of the sun, accurately enough for his purposes. There lies
[422] (compare also No. 27) in the mention of the watches, a slight
[405] reproach: It should never happen to you to run over time. For what purpose do you have watches?

Ya-lli ma'akum is-sā'āt,
ādí mī'ād 'afa-lla fāt!

Ye, who have watches,
Look, it is already past time for quitting work!

34.

×539 To appreciate this call, one must have stood, one's self,
461 in the dust of an excavating field.

Ya sīdi, 'afa-lla, nāna!
we-bṭilna weš-šuṛl 'ammāna.

O Sir, let the working-time be over, it is enough!
We are "finished" and the work has made us blind.

2. "We are finished": we have come to the end of our strength.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

45.

×539 As in the preceding song, the person addressed, is the caravan-driver.

Istanne telāt daraǵāt,
lamma awadda' rufa'āti
wa'ul-luhum:
'azzam Allāh agrukum fīye!

Wait three degrees,
That I may take leave of my companions
And say to them:
576 "May Allah bless you richly for all that ye have done for me!"

1. Three degrees on the primitive sun-dial, which is made [405] [805] by thrusting a stick into the ground. According to it, the periods of work at the shādūf are regulated.

107.

Persuasion.

539x
832

The girl comes to her lover, named Abu Mūsa, who is busy at the sāqye (compare No. 97), to fetch him from his work. "Thou wilt find work at home to do, and there thou wilt be near me, and there will be time, too, for something else beside work."

Yabu Mūsa, ḥill et-tōr!
Walla, māna ḥāllo,
lamma maiyil ḍillo.
Ḍillo maiyil u-rāḥ,
5 *wa-la ba'āš illa-l-mirwāḥ,*
ṣaffē banāni, ṣaff ilwaḥ,
ṣaff il-ḥōḥ 'ala-t-tiffāḥ!
Ta'āle, ya ḥabībi, wišwešni;
aḥsan rāḥ teṛib we-tūḥašni.

"Abu Mūsa, untie the bull!"
"By Allah! I will not untie him
Until his shadow has grown long." [805]
"But his shadow has already grown long and gone away,
5 And there is nothing left to do but to go

119.

The Door and the Lover.

Ya bāb, 'ul-li 'ala auwil meṣāḥibetak, 539x
ya bāb, 'albi inšabak mi' ḥubbê ṣāḥibetak, 832
ya bāb, ana kuntê gāi-lak ma' ṣiyaḥ ed-dīk, 342
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak warmīk,
5 *ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak, sibtak.*
Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Ḥalli el-'a'l sākin fīk,
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gāfik?
Ma ultê: Ya bāb, gāk ḫafsê bi-muftāḥak,
'iyūn ḥabībi terāi min bēn ilwāḥak.
10 *Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li ta'tibni,*
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma 'ultê: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtê 'alê māli,
u-lē ma 'ābilt el-gamūl badri u-hu-māli,
'ul-lo, ḫalli yūfi il-mi'ād!
15 *Illi 'alê si'ān ṣauwamni 'an akl ez-zād.*
'asamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-'ām yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍā-li-b-uaṣlo lasakkano il-alḥād!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground. [825]
5 O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 the people begin to be in an active and excited state. Numerous groups collect in the open spaces and scan the [821] western horizon to see if they can discover the new moon; since it is only on the testimony of a Moslim that he has seen the new moon—though he may be a man of no account whatever—that the festival can begin. Even the most accurate astronomical calculation, so far as this is possible, has not the same authority. The rising and setting of the new as well as of the full moon are not regulated exactly by those of the sun, since the synodic or lunar month contains 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes, and the time of conjunction, when moon, earth, and sun are in a right line, happens at very different hours of the day in different months. The time at which the new moon, so eagerly looked for by the Mohammedans, first reappears after astronomical new-moon also depends upon the season of the year; it is seen earliest in the spring months, for reasons depending upon the position of the moon's path relatively to that of the sun. An astronomer says that he has not seen the moon earlier than forty hours after nor later than twenty-seven hours before the astronomical new-moon, but that by a combination of all favourable circumstances this may even happen within twenty-four hours, and travellers maintain that they have seen the old moon on the morning and the new moon on the evening of the same day. To these considerations one is led who every year looks on, while the Moslimin thus eagerly and for the most part uselessly watch the heavens. Since the official calendar pays no attention to this important [805] method of determining Ramadan, it simply gives, now to one month, now to another, thirty or twenty-nine days in order to make up the total of 354. Accordingly, when the first of Ramadan occurs in the calendar, it is by no means certain whether at the same time the new moon is visible. The more scientific among the heads of the province often actually cause the fast to be altered a day till the moon is perfectly visible in the evening sky. When Ramadan falls in winter, at which season the sky is often clouded, and in high latitudes, where it is gloomy for weeks at a time, the determina-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath [796]
of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this [778]
day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye- [826]
powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, [757]
a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the [789]
coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusâra*) [574]
these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals [805]
are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed- [788]
cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of [443]
coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces [252]
and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent [521] [526]

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) (ʼʼa). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water. F 823 F [842 827] F [755] F [763]

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied." C 782 823

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth. F 843 844 261

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth. F 852

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between [183] ignorance and tyranny. (**)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831 how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524 with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857] animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the [684] fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735 to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183 home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771 beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183 They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771 wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812 ● It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437 no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (**) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

183
771 "*In sha Allah*".
812 "In sha Allah's no good. We're talking business, and
737 I want a definite promise".

"No *in sha Allah*, no cotton, *ya khawâga*. Good day".

771 'God will provide. God distributes His benefits. God
776 protects the crops. God is with the patient. To everyone
181 the fate which God has assigned him. We are from God, and to God we shall return. God is there. God will give in His own good time. Man proposes and God disposes. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such, are the sentences of peasant theology. They encourage fatalism and deepen resignation, but they are often rich with all the splendour of filial obedience to the Divine Will.

776 The fellah believes in God as the Prime Mover and First
2 of all Living. In spite of the poverty of his intellect, and his ignorance in matters of religion, his conception of God is admirably pure. God is the Almighty, the Just, the Good. All attributes are united in the word the peasant uses for God, *Rabbina*, our Lord and Master. To hear a fellah utter this word is to be convinced of his faith.

771 The superstitions which enmesh his soul have not cor-
782 rupted the essence of his faith. The fellaheen are far more
785 given to prayer and asceticism than other people, for they are by nature believers. They have always been powerfully attracted by sacredness (*baraka*), the supernatural, holiness, or even the appearance of these things.

779 The Catholics among the fellaheen, whom the writer
793 knows best, can be splendidly religious in their lives, even to
771 the point of heroism. Those of their priests who are fellaheen live among them and for them with a devotion and self-denial of which missionaries from Europe would rarely be capable. It must not be forgotten that the first monks of the Christian world, the monks of the Thebaid, were fellaheen (").

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs". 539x 563 186 [221] [231]

Ma 'ultê-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
5 *maktūb u-m'addar.*

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
5 Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until later. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems. [812]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

It is not without significance that in ceremonies of circumcision and marriage, the boy and the man have to visit the mosque in a ceremonial way where dates and food are distributed. In praise of marriage, a villager would quote the Prophet's saying, 'He who marries has perfected half his religious requirements, and he has only to fear God in the other half'. It is also worth stating that the majority of the personal names of both sexes have some religious meaning or are the names of some religious personalities.

The importance of sacredness not only permeates those levels, justifying acts and deeds, but also reaches the substance of living, namely, foodstuffs and bread, usually referred to as the 'sustenance of Islam' and which are considered to be sacred. A good harvest is a sign of God's approval; a torrent of rain which destroys the villagers' crops is a sign of His disapproval. To impart holiness to the land before sowing, or to the harvest before threshing, a sacrifice of an animal and the partaking of a communal meal are desirable acts. According to the enlightened religious view, the villagers do not distinguish between pagan and the proper Islamic concepts. The village schoolmaster said that the belief in the power of saints, sorcery, and magic, and the appeal to divination and ritual for healing the sick as practised in the village, are complexly interwoven with Islamic beliefs, but they are not in fact a part of the pure Faith.[1] It is believed that sickness might be inflicted by a saint for not fulfilling a vow taken in his name, or for not offering him his due customary gift and sacrifice. A great deal of treatment of disease and of acquiring of good luck could be achieved by prayers, sacred charms, and propitiation of saints. The strength of the religious force could be also ascertained from the fact that the most binding guarantee for a promise is to swear by the name of Allah or to read the Fatiha. It is also customary for the villagers to take an oath sacrifice for God or a saint, which is a kind of conditional oath involving the slaying of an animal on the fulfilment of a certain task and the attendant danger that may ensue in the event of perjury.

The certainty and uniformity in religious beliefs and rituals specially noted in the observance of the fasting month, is an index of the religious group cohesiveness. All the villagers belong to the Maliki school of the Sunni tradition. Most of the adult villagers attend the Friday noon prayers, and say their regular daily prayers either at home or in the mosque. There is a well-known Islamic tradition believed by the villagers that group prayers are more efficacious and rewarding than those said alone.

It is no exaggeration to say that the folk culture of the village is permeated by religious sanctions and moral values derived from the Islamic traditions as revealed in the Koran and also infused with rituals and beliefs of an older tradition. It is not difficult to assert that there is hardly

[1] See John Walker, *Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt*, London, 1934. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions*, London, 1930.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of gossip and warning against such mixture. 582

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth. 853

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting. 856

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food. 862

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circumcision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive. [821] [842] [304] [821]

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its 854

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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fact that the mother, in taking the child to the Nile, throws his foreskin, enclosed in a loaf of bread, into the water, and washes the 'mirwad' (antimony stick) used in the operation in the waters of the Nile. This relationship is also evidenced by the fact that circumcision, like weaning, should take place at least two or three days before the appearance of the new moon, otherwise the child is liable to be 'tied up' (mushahir), the consequence of which may be that the wound might not heal quickly, or that the child might eventually be sterile.

Children show great interest in the circumcision ceremony, as it is a great occasion in which they associate with the circumcised child, eat with him, enjoy themselves, inviting people for the ceremony, or going on the children's round with their palm-tree branches, or getting sweets and peanuts during the procession. They usually tell you of the good food they had or the new clothes they wore on the occasion of their younger sibling's or cousin's circumcision. On asking some of the schoolchildren about events during which they felt happy, they invariably gave the answer of a sibling's circumcision or marriage. The educative significance of the ceremony for the older children, who witness and attend this public celebration, though indirect, is quite obvious. The social norms based on mutual obligations, the meaning of kinship and family solidarity, are concomitant in the ritual ceremony.

One cannot discuss circumcision without reference to the psychoanalytical explanation of the ritual. Freud sees in it the castration complex, which is derived from the Oedipus situation. He states that in some primitive societies circumcision is common and is performed at the age of initiation into manhood, and it was only as a secondary development that it was transferred to the early years of life. He continues: 'It is of great interest to find that among primitive peoples, circumcision is combined with cutting the hair, and knocking out of teeth, or is replaced by them, and that our children, who cannot possibly have any knowledge of this, in fact, treat these two operations, in the anxiety with which they react to them, as equivalents of castration.'[1] In Silwa such an anxiety concerning castration is évident in the adults' threatening their children to re-circumcise them even if they are already circumcised, and it manifested itself in one of the children's dreams described later.[2]

Some psycho-analysts maintain that circumcision, as an initiating ceremony of the child by his elders, helps to conduct the growing children across those difficult thresholds of life transformations that demand change in the patterns, not only of conscious, but also of unconscious life.[3] Géza Roheim maintains that circumcision represents a process of the child's growth from the passive Oedipus situation to the active orientation towards the loved object. 'The period of life which conditions the transition from

[1] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, footnote, p. 153. [2] See Appendix XI.
[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series, New York, 1949, p. 10.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

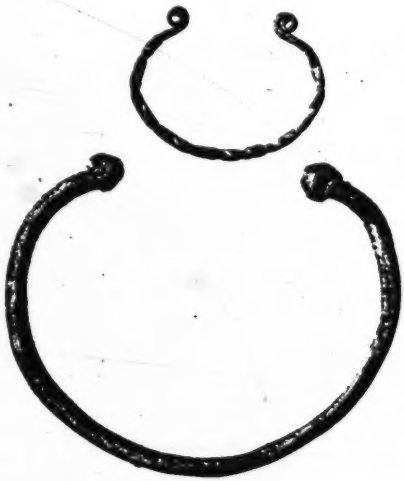
the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

845
842
774

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]



[789]
[843]
[761]

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three 843 842 761

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another
821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God
761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts
F thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.
[776]

F Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has
846 given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven
F days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was
[853] last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives
761 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens,
845 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die.
853 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.
825

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly
F conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what-
789 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men
853 have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all
778 round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a
846 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must
262 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of
789 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do
853 this she will have no milk.

E When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant,
846 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her
854 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of
776 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls
779 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest
789

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

Rain-Songs.

539x
821

16.

In spite of the overflowing of the Nile, rain is regarded by the Egyptian peasant, as a most desirable aid; and especially so, of course, in bad years.

Ya rabbĕ tišti,
we-billĕ bišti;
wel-'amḥ yirḫaṣ
we-amla kirši.

O Lord, let it rain,
Wet my little dress!
So that corn will be cheaper,
And I can fill my belly!

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17.

×539 "Rain, pour it out", that is, all the water which you can
● 821 give, so that all the vessels in the house will overflow, even
[551] to the coffee-cups. Both personal names (ʿAbdulle and ʿAbd-el-ʿâl) are taken, of course, only to rhyme with the names of the vessels. It is certainly mere accident, that the name ʿAbdalla appears also in a similar rain-song of Dalman's (P. 175; from Aleppo).

Ya naṭaret ʿAbdulle,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-ʾulle.
Ya naṭaret ʿAbd-el-ʿâl,
ṣubbīha wimla-l-fingāl.

O Rain of ʿAbdulle,
Pour it out and fill the water-bottle!
O Rain of ʿAbd-el-ʿāl,
Pour it out and fill the cup.

2. ʾulle are the water-bottles, of porous, unglazed clay, in
[415] which the drinking-water is kept fresh.

4. Fingāl (fingān) are the little coffee-cups without handles, which are placed in little stands (zarf) resembling egg-cups.

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19.

×539
821

Song to a sun-shower.

ʿĒb ʿalēk, ya naṭare,
wes-sams mefattaḥe.

Shame yourself, O rain,
For the sun has broken through!

2. Literally: "has opened". The same word is used with flowers which are unfolding, e. g. No. 6, l. 7.

20.

Preparations for a Feast.

539
527
821
[252]
[356]
[482]

Faṭne (Fatme), the daughter of the Prophet Moḥammed, and her husband ʿAli, are represented in the song as simple Egyptian peasants. She is about to bake cakes for the feast; first hastily cleaning the house and carrying the basket of sweepings out upon her head. Everyone who is acquainted with Egyptian villages will have often seen this picture.

ʿAli, the master of the house, to please his wife, has gone as far as southern Upper Egypt, for the sake of an iron hook, for taking bread from the oven. At the beginning, the sun, which has hidden behind the clouds, is requested to show its pleasantest face at the feast: for there is not continuous blue sky in northern Upper Egypt. At Saqqāra, in winter, we [132] often had an overcast sky and heavy rainfalls.

Fattaḥi, ya semise, ya semise,
lagl ʿAli u-Moḥammadî
we-Faṭne, bint en-nabi!
u-ʿaginha ʾuddamha.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

539x
527
821

5 *Rāḥet tekubbê-trabha*
we-zaḥferān fi-kmamha.
we-gōzha rāḥ eṣ-ṣa'īd
yegīb-liha baškūr ḥadīd,
tiḫbiz-bo kaḥk el-'īd, kaḥk el-'īd.

Come out again, O sun, dear sun,
For 'Ali's and Moḥammed's sakes
And Faṭne's, daughter of the Prophet!
Her dough stands there before her.
5 She went to empty out her dust;
Saffron colored were her sleeves.
Her goodman has gone to the Ṣa'īd,
To fetch for her an iron hook,
That she may bake with it the cakes for the feast,
the cakes for the feast!

1. Literally: "open yourself"; compare No. 19, l. 2.

6. Upon raising the arm which supports the basket, the sleeve of the yellow, under garment is visible. The outer garments of the peasant women are generally black. [20]

7. Southern Upper Egypt (eṣ-ṣa'īd, as the region south of Aṣyûṭ is called) is often a synonym for a long distance. A similar example in No. 128, l. 1. Aṣyûṭ is about as far from Saqqāra as New York is from Washington, or Davenport from London. [195] [484]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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35.

ʿafa-lla ʿad 539x
we-bṭilna we-fāt el-miʿâd! 461

Working-time is over, again,
We are "finished" and time is up!

2. Compare No. 34, note on l. 2.

36.

"It will be dark before we reach home, so call a halt!" 539x
Almost all peasants who are away from the village at nightfall, feel very uncomfortable, see No. 4, Note on l. 8. Our boy, Abu Bekr (see preface, p. VIII), once wrote me: Ellēl ṛūl, we-kull en-nās teḫāf minno: "The night is a witch and everybody is afraid of her". 821

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-msauwaḥna,
ya dōb es-sams terauwaḥna.

O Sir, thou who hast brought us (hither),
The sun will hardly bring us (home)!

1. That is to say: by whose command we have come to work.

37.

Compare the remark on No. 36.

Ya sīdi, ya-lli-mdādīna,
ya dōb es-sams tewaddīna.

O Sir, thou who treatest us kindly,
The sun will scarcely guide us (home)!

1. "Treatest .. kindly": as a nurse (dāda) would.

[P. 36 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

89.

The Wind, the Rogue.

×539
● 821
[114]

Tantavy, in Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire, p. 222 (hence of the year 1848) has this same little song in a slightly varying form. According to that version we have inserted ʿāni in our last line, in order to rhyme with gāni, instead of ḫāli as Maḥmūd gave it.

Ḥabaṭ el-hawa fil-bāb,
ʾult el-ḥelēwe gāni.
Atarīk, ya hawa, kaddāb,
beyiḍḥak ʿala-l-ʾalb el-ʿāni.

The wind knocked at the door,
And I said: "My little sweetheart has come to me."
Therefore art thou a rogue, O wind,
Who laughs at a grieving heart.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

120.

Ye Stars of the Night!

539 821

'Alye is the ladylove of the noted hero of romance, Abu Zēd, whose life forms a favorite theme for public recitations. He belonged to the tribe of the Beni Hilāl. [537] [773]

Ya nugūm el-lēl, šūfu mā garā-li!
Mā yenām il-lēl illa abu 'albē ḫali.
Ya ma baket 'Alye 'al-Abu Zēd el-Hilāli!

Ye stars of the night, see what has happened to me!
At night he only, sleeps, whose heart is free.
How hath 'Alye wept for Abu Zēd el-Hilali!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 the people begin to be in an active and excited state. Numerous groups collect in the open spaces and scan the
[821] western horizon to see if they can discover the new moon; since it is only on the testimony of a Moslim that he has seen the new moon—though he may be a man of no account whatever—that the festival can begin. Even the most accurate astronomical calculation, so far as this is possible, has not the same authority. The rising and setting of the new as well as of the full moon are not regulated exactly by those of the sun, since the synodic or lunar month contains 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes, and the time of conjunction, when moon, earth, and sun are in a right line, happens at very different hours of the day in different months. The time at which the new moon, so eagerly looked for by the Mohammedans, first reappears after astronomical new-moon also depends upon the season of the year; it is seen earliest in the spring months, for reasons depending upon the position of the moon's path relatively to that of the sun. An astronomer says that he has not seen the moon earlier than forty hours after nor later than twenty-seven hours before the astronomical new-moon, but that by a combination of all favourable circumstances this may even happen within twenty-four hours, and travellers maintain that they have seen the old moon on the morning and the new moon on the evening of the same day. To these considerations one is led who every year looks on, while the Moslimin thus eagerly and for the most part uselessly watch the heavens. Since the official calendar pays no attention to this important
[805] method of determining Ramadan, it simply gives, now to one month, now to another, thirty or twenty-nine days in order to make up the total of 354. Accordingly, when the first of Ramadan occurs in the calendar, it is by no means certain whether at the same time the new moon is visible. The more scientific among the heads of the province often actually cause the fast to be altered a day till the moon is perfectly visible in the evening sky. When Ramadan falls in winter, at which season the sky is often clouded, and in high latitudes, where it is gloomy for weeks at a time, the determina-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

291 money, usually the Egyptian pound, and, according to my in-
301 formant, they represent the money given to the bride before her
554 marriage; thus the wealth of a woman may be estimated by looking at her veil. I have not yet visited Sharḳīyeh Province, and have therefore not had the opportunity of verifying this statement myself.

291 To draw the veil over the lower part of the face is a sign of respect
554 for superiors, as well as a means of concealing the face from the gaze of men. For the former reason the women when passing me in the roads usually draw the veil over the face, however old they may be. Black and dark blue are mourning colours, and a dress
822 of the latter colour is always worn in the house by a widow in place
765 of the brighter coloured one which she wore before her husband
589 died. She also wears a dark blue kerchief on her head, with a black veil over it when out of doors.

291 Men do not make any change in their attire after losing a relative,
302 but some, as I have already stated, refrain from shaving, and let
765 the head and facial hair grow long for some time after the death of a near, and especially a male, relative.

291 The loose, flowing robes of both men and women are admirably adapted to the climate, and it is much to be hoped that the custom of wearing the native dress will not die out. Much of the picturesqueness of the country would go if European dress became the fashion in Egyptian villages, and, moreover, the native costume is infinitely healthier and more comfortable in the hot, dry climate of the Nile Valley.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [792] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [151]

FIG. 50 WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 136, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of
775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If
782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot
805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
782 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
262 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[774] [2] After this age the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 291

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

F A 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

F A 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

F A 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

F A 849

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 764 152

(Fig. 162) of a painting in the tomb-chapel of Re'mōse at Thebes.

The attitude of the wailing mother in Fig. 50, p. 110, and Fig. 137, p. 236, finds an exact parallel in the wailing women depicted in a painting in the tomb-chapel of Amenemḥēt at Thebes.[1]

A [535] [532]

F A [822]

The modern custom of smearing the hands, arms, and face with blue dye (pp. 111, 122, 264) may also be ancient, in view of blue having been the ancient mourning colour (p. 286); but, so far as my brother is aware, the ancient artists have not shown this in the pictures of wailing women.

FIG. 163. FUNERARY DANCE PERFORMED BY FEMALE MOURNERS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 419.

The perambulation of the town or village by the female relatives and friends immediately after a death has taken place (p. 109) is described by Herodotus[2] in the following words:

> When a member of any distinction dies in an household, all the female members of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then, leaving the corpse in the house, they parade the town, and smite themselves, having their garments girt up and their breasts exposed; and all their female kin accompany them.

A 764 765 535

The pre- and post-burial dance performed by the mourning women, described on pp. 114, 123, 263, finds close parallel in a relief from a New Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh, now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 163). As in the funerary dance described on p. 114, the women are dancing to the beating of single-membrane

[1] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *ibid.*, bottom register, left.
[2] ii, 85.

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[1]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[1] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [342] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers – religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *'afārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

347 Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes, with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the 463 tailors are to be seen making *galālīb* (long blouses; singular, [294] *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may [326] watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

363
443
291
342

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

352 Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are 461 found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen 231 a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy pro- 788 miscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

293 During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women 465 beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

312 The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which 823 I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore con- 755 nected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

for sore eyes, fever, and other complaints. The canal, according to the peasants, was made in a miraculous way by the patriarch Joseph (Yūsuf). They relate that he started one day to walk from Deirūṭ, where the Baḥr el-Yūsuf (Canal of Joseph) diverges from the Ibrahimīyeh Canal, and as he went he trailed his stick behind him. Water began to flow along the course marked by his stick until he came to the lake Ḳarūn, at the north-west side of Fayūm Province, and into this lake the numerous streams in which the Baḥr terminates disgorge themselves. Owing to this belief regarding the origin of the canal, its water is believed to contain much *barakeh* (blessing, healing virtues, good luck), and accordingly, on the day of *Shemm en-Nesīm*, which coincides with the Coptic Easter Monday, the men make a point of bathing in the canal, for on this occasion the water is believed to be endowed with *barakeh* to a special degree.

FIG. 12. A MAN WITH A ROSARY SITTING ON A MAṢṬABEH

The following is another tradition connected with the Baḥr el-Yūsuf.[1] It is a translation from an Arabic manuscript. "Joseph, to whom may Allah show mercy and grant peace, when he was Prime Minister of Egypt and high in favour with Raiyan, his

[1] Quoted by Sir R. H. Brown, K.C.M.G., R.E., in *The Fayûm and Lake Moeris* (London, 1892), pp. 22–24.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. 775 682

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭalaʿ*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭalaʿ* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions. 769 764 [823]

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors. 769 [492] [793]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *ʿafrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!" C 776

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *ʿafrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it. F

The *ʿafārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *ʿafārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *ʿafrīt* will come near him. The *ʿafārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *ʿafārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets. F 776 784 F [823] F [226] [227] F

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *ʿomdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *ʿomdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *ʿafrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *ʿafrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *ʿafrīt* disappeared. C [469] E [241] C [788]

That *ʿafārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *ʿafārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly. E 776 E C [304] C F [774]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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thus thrown away. I have not as yet come across this custom myself.

On this day most of the people rise very early and go into the fields, spending the entire day out of doors. The men, at any rate in Fayūm Province, usually bathe in the Yūsuf Canal, the water of which is supposed to possess special *barakeh* on this occasion.[1]

On *Yōm Sabt en-Nūr*—the Sabbath, or Saturday, of the Light—people of both sexes and of all ages put into their eyes a small

FIG. 149. PALM-BRANCHES PLAITED INTO VARIOUS SHAPES, USED IN A COPTIC CHURCH ON PALM SUNDAY

quantity of powder made from the placenta of a cat dried and pounded.[2] It is believed to make the eyes beautiful. To be told that you have the eyes of a cat is a great compliment (see p. 220).

On the Coptic Palm Sunday it is the custom to plait the leaves of palm-branches, without their being removed from the mid-rib, into a variety of forms, many of which are very intricate. Sometimes a round loaf of Eucharistic bread is enclosed within the plaited leaves. These palm-branches are taken to the church for the service held on this occasion. The illustration (Fig. 149) shows a group of men holding their palms, which they had taken to the church belonging to a Coptic monastery in the desert close

[1] See p. 33. [2] *Cf.* E. W. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 223.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign 𓅱 (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fiḳīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.

[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.

[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

Chapter VIII

TRADITIONS OF THE SOIL

181 Certain traditions, rites and ceremonies are handed down from generation to generation without being either questioned or understood(**). These are traditions of the soil, bearing witness to the union of the fellah with his field, and the closeness of the peasant group to soil and water and their products.

This intimacy was clear enough when we were considering the work, life and home of the fellah. We shall do well to prepare ourselves for a study of the fellah's psychology (Chapter IX) by considering some of the traditional rites and customs which are to be met with at every turn of his life.

These are not merely superstitions, though it would be as difficult for us as it is for the fellaheen themselves to explain the origin or meaning of them all. One thing they all seem to have in common: they point to a mysterious correlation between nature and man. Unconsciously or subconsciously, in repeating these rites the fellah shows an instinctive feeling that he belongs to the soil. It is a feeling which has contributed a good deal to the stagnation of the Egyptian countryside.

312 The fellaheen have a great respect for water, the water
271 that comes from the Nile. They avoid filtering it, so as
823 not to take the life out of it. They bring it to be blessed by the passing missionary, and offer it as a familiar and much-appreciated drink. They never mistrust it, and make no distinction between washing- and drinking-water. All water is good, like the Nile from which it comes.

796 The festival of the Bride of the Nile, or the Cutting of the Dam, takes place in Cairo (**) at the height of the flood. The fellah has no part in it, but he feels much more than any townsman that the Nile is male and alive. The river
823 is always flowing within his sight, either in the foreground,

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

183 The women are more intelligent than the men. Sir
184 William Willcocks, whose great achievements in irrigation by no means prevented him from studying the fellaheen, explains the difference thus: — "A bad government, if passively accepted by men, who are naturally active, will sooner or later demoralise them. The same government, if passively submitted to by women, who are naturally passive, tends on the contrary to develop their intelligence. That is why the fellah women are not only more intelligent, but more trustworthy than the men (**)".

This opinion is open to discussion. The fact it seeks to explain — the traditional feminism of Egypt — is quite clear.

181 The fellah's wife is also more cunning than her husband,
183 which is saying a good deal. Like all weak people the fellah
562 practises cunning to the point of duplicity. He knows how to conceal his joy, his suffering or his crime. His inexpressive features are a great help. In his shifts and dodges — when he leaves it to time to decide, when he agrees without any intention of keeping his word, when he uses evasive language or purposely misunderstands — he shows an adaptability which is indeed a kind of intelligence, but intelligence at the level of instinct.

181 The fellah seems lacking in logic. In reality his ideas run parallel, and he judges by his own standards. Ask a
[823] fellah how far it is to a certain village, and he will reply "A piastre bus-ride".

181 The *'omda* understands this mentality perfectly. "Go
565 to your father, my lad, and tell him that the Bey (his creditor) is waiting here for him. If your father isn't there, tell him to come all the same, for the Bey knows that he is there." And the father, his bluff called in advance, comes along without any trouble at all.

181 The truth is that the fellah does not think outside the immediate present; he is fettered to the actual moment. No time and place except the present have much effect on his mind, because they have none on his senses. He is like a primitive man or a child; his intellect is controlled by his senses, and remains close to things felt and done. The fellah looks for causes and effects in the field not of reason, sight. Life to him is a succession but of todays. That is why he seems illogical.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

10.

The Well Zemzem.

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The well Zemzem is the miraculous well in the Mosque of Mekka. Pilgrims drink from it and are accustomed to carry vials of its water home with them. In a very similar song of Dalman's (P. 8; from Ḥawāra in Aglûn in Palestine) the Zemzem well is addressed, but it means a girl. Perhaps our song is also to be thus understood.

Ya bīrî Zemzem, salabik selāsil,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lim-mesāfir.
Ya bīrî Zemzem salabik ḥarīr,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lil-ʿalīl.

Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like chains,
And to drink from thee is medicine for the traveler.
Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like silk,
[757] And to drink from thee is medecine for the sick.

1. 3. This is a draught-well. Its ropes are as strong as chains and as soft as silk.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [521] [526] in conversation, ball playing, and gymnastic exercises, and those whose conscience allows it smell the contents of their dram-bottle as well as the fresh air and roast meat. Health must be inhaled to-day since the five days' period of terror, 753 796 the time of the *chamasin*, is now at hand. A serpent then wanders over the earth and infects the atmosphere with its [776] poisonous breath, leaving behind small-pox, plague, cholera ("the yellow wind"), and all other varieties of disease. The curse is not removed till Whitsuntide dissolves it.

THE NIGHT OF THE DROP.

796 823 On the 17th of June a "drop" falls (according to the ancients a tear of Isis) into the decreasing waters of the Nile, and impregnates the wonderful stream. Its effect is soon after observed in the dirtier colour of the water, then in its more rapid flow, and lastly in its increase and overflow. On this day, or on the night, the "night of the drop," young and old flock to the banks of the blessed stream.

THE NERUS DAY.

541 On the 10th September, the first day of the Coptic solar year, the river has reached to about its highest point, and on this day—the *nerûs*, the people give themselves up to the pleasures of the carnival. For three days it is all up with the rule of the Turks; every little town chooses for itself in its own way, and from its own midst, a ruler (*abu nerus*), who has a towering fool's cap set upon his head, and a long spectral beard of flax fastened to his chin, and is clothed in a peculiar garment. With a long sceptre in his hand, and followed by a crowd of correspondingly-dressed bailiffs, hangmen, and scribes, he promenades the streets and turns his steps straight to the hall of the chief magistrate. Every one bends before him, the guards at the door make way, the governor of the province or of the town has the humour to let himself be ousted, while the new dignitary seats himself on his throne and holds a most rigorous criminal investiga-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, "I am very angry."

His father said, "Why are you angry, my son?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

FA 782 342 [346]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

FA 165 152 176 [119]

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

FA 577 824

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

FA 538

A 113

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.

[2] ii, 90.

[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.

[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.

[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.

[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.

[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.

[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.

[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[3]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bādhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bādhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[3] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

this quack at a crushing price. When I examined it I found the bulk of it to be powder of ginger [*zangabīl*]. All the people of the provinces believe that these substances are exciting and burning in proportion to their usefulness. But what I say is, that the employment of ginger as *koḥl* is very like the use of the powder of *Jakarītī* (?) one of the plants of Brazil. (It is violently corrosive and is used to produce artificial purulent ophthalmia).

The Moorish quacks employ in cases of ophthalmia a medicine which one of them divulged to me as a great secret, saying that it was composed as follows:

(1) One drachm of the liver of a cock with ten claws;[1]
(2) One drachm of clarified fluid from the eyes of an old hoopoe[2]; [p. 56] (3) five drachms of *shūnīz* (i.e. "*the black seed.*")[3]

Boil the whole over a slow fire, and after it becomes dry and powdery, let it be used as *koḥl*; then the old hazinesses will become clear, and it will put an end to the ulcerations of the eye and cataract.

XXIX

THE INFLUENCE OF GUISES AND TITLES AND APPELLATIONS

FATE has decreed that the Egyptian should neglect his rights and rate himself lower than the Westerner with his different origin and nationality. So you see him not only being let down in the eyes of Europeans (who have some right for glorying and boasting on account of the benefits they have attained in Science and Civilisation), but also in the eyes of such

[1] [The colloquial word used is *mu'awshar*, and it is said that when such a cock enters the house and crows, an angel will appear. Tr.]
[2] [The *hudhud*, or *hidhid*, the celebrated bird in the Solomon Saga.]
[3] [This is the seed of the Fennel flower, black cummin, and is often named in the vernacular, *habbat-al-baraka*, the "seed of the blessing," because its other name, the "*black seed*" is not propitious. See the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XII*, 207. Tr.]

/84 cont'd/

3. Next the Kūdiya will inform the patient whether she needs a Zar-ceremony or not. If the Zar-ceremony is decided on, the Kūdiya will tell the patient which spirit took possession of her and will instruct her about the Zar-ceremony, i.e. the amulets, clothes, sacrifices etc. required by her particular spirit. The preparatory period of about one month is used by the patient with getting ready to fulfill the desires of her spirit. 755 [787]

4. A week before the day fixed for the Zar-ceremony, the Kūdiya will get into contact with her special musical band and have her assistants prepared for the day. The patient is also informed of the day fixed upon. She must know of this day well in advance in order to inform any woman who has made a Zar before and, of course, her relations and friends.

5. On the eve before the Zar-day the Kūdiya goes to the patients house, accompanied by her assistants and the musical band. She prepares the following important items: Incense (Bukhur), "hennah", and "El-kursi" (literal translation: "the chair"), which is like a table placed in the centre of the room in which the ceremony is to take place. A white cloth is spread over it and a tray with dishes and bowls placed on it. They contain all kinds of nuts, dates, sweets, pies, green vegetables, vine, bread, sour milk and flowers. The table is then covered with a mosquito-net, candles are lit on it and left burning until midnight. This Kursi is similar to the table of offerings a cultural element showing a continuity for millenia dating from Ancient /85/ Egypt (11). Hennah is mixed with water and rubbed on the hands or feet where it remains for several hours, then it is washed off, but a reddish tint will remain for about one month. (12) 755 782 [262] [171] [824]

Then the patient is brought in. The opening of the Quoran, i.e. the first Surah, is recited, drums are beaten and the Kūdiya rubs the sick woman's body with hennah. After, any other woman present can do the same to herself. The drums are beaten until midnight. This day is called "Hennah-day".

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(11) See, Translation by Erman, p. 298/99

(12) Hennah is used as a remedy for some diseases and found also use in Ancient Egypt. [171]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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6.

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Praise of the Prophet.

This song was a special favorite of our boys and was often sung:

"All nature, animate and inanimate, rendered its homage to the Prophet." Evidently Maḥmûd understood the song not solely as something that happened in time long past, when the Prophet still walked on earth. He wished the camel, mentioned in l. 5, to be understood as the one which carries the Maḥmal[1] each year from Cairo to Mecca and back. This interpretation certainly is false and artificial, but it indicates, that Maḥmûd thought not only of the distant past: each nod of the wind-bowed palms and the opening of every rosebud is, even to this day, a greeting for the Prophet.

[824]

Ya ʿēni, weṣ-ṣala ʿan-nabi,
we-ṣalāt en-nabi maksabi.
Mitwaḥḥid rabbak, ya ṣabi.
Wen-naḫle sagadit lin-nabi,
5 *wel-gamal ḥām lin-nabi,*
wil-ḥagar lān lin-nabi,
wil-ward fattaḥ lin-nabi,
wel-ḥaṣa sabbaḥ le-rabbo:
kullo kerāme lin-nabi.

Thou, mine eye, Allah's blessing be upon the Prophet!
And the prayer of the Prophet shall be my gain.
Thy Lord is an only one — O boy.
The palm-tree bowed before the Prophet,
5 And the camel ran about searching for the Prophet,

[1]) Regarding Maḥmal see Lane II p. 182.

×539
883

5 *Wet-tōr ʾāl: Dauwarūni,*
amla li-sūd el-ʿiyūnî.
Win gat el-ʿagūz, baṭṭalūni,
taḥram ʿalēye-d-doūra.

"O sāqye with the huge wheel
Have the girls come down here to thee?"
[824] "One with a head-kerchief has come down to me,
[826] Whose heel is like a cucumber."
5 And the ox said: "Drive me around,
That I may fill for the 'black-eyed'.
If, however, the old one comes, then let me halt,
For then the turning is forbidden me."

4. The comparison of the sweetheart's heels with the tenderness of a cucumber, is a delightfully characteristic notion of the Egyptian peasant. Maḥmûd understood ka'b as "heel", but I should not fail to mention the opinion of Arabists, that a very similarly sounding word (ku'b), meaning "breast", is to be read here.

6. Namely: Fill the trench for the black-eyed girls, who come to draw water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

[501]

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 8.

4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāziq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

53 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624]

1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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541 the festival. Upon a wheeled conveyance, and adorned with flags and ribbons, a small boat is pulled along, the property of the saint, and at other times hung up in his mausoleum. In it he is said to have from time to time made journeys by sea and river. The end of the procession is formed by camels bearing huge kettle-drums, which the rider belabours with a [534] mighty drum-stick. Behind these, lastly, comes the crowd of people extending as far as the eye can reach. Thus they march away, often to some spot leagues distant in the desert, and after making the round of the town appear before the serail of the governor. This solemn moment, which does not take place till towards evening, is proclaimed by the thunder of ordnance. At some places the firing takes place at the start of the procession. With the replacing of the arks in 796 the temple of their sainted owners the festivities come to an end, and next morning all the people are again in their working clothes.

EASTER WEEK.

It is remarkable that the bigoted Mohammedans celebrate, at least in Egypt, some days in common with the native Christians, though certainly in a peculiar and by no means Christian manner. To these belong especially the days about Easter. On Palm Sunday (*had el chus*) the women bind palm [788] twigs round their heads and fingers. On the Monday following people eat *fugus* (a kind of cucumber) along with [262] caraway; on Tuesday, whey with onions, this day being accordingly called "whey and onion day" (*yum el mish u el basal*). The Wednesday is universally known by the name of Job's Wednesday (*arba Ayub*). On this day the plant *ghubera* (*Inula arabica?*) said to Job in his illness, "Wash thyself with my juice, and thou wilt recover;" he did recover, [824] and on this day it is customary for all the Egyptians to wash [783] themselves with the *gharghara Ayub*. Maunday Thursday has become "pea-Thursday." Good Friday is called among [262] the Mohammedans, "cake and butter Friday" (*guma'a el mafruka*), cakes spread with butter and honey being the special dainty on this day.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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527 They also clap their hands, beat the kettle-drums, make
[533] gestures and movements of all kinds, wag their heads about,
jump, stoop down, but do not move from the spot. At the
535 same time female forms, completely veiled and enveloped in
an outer robe, enter the circle and dance, but in their dancing
also there is no violent galloping about, nor even hopping,
but they move with varying paces, run sideways, backwards
and forwards, wriggle, bend, and turn round slowly. The
pantomimic motions are made with their hands, their faces
not being available for the purpose. The row of singers
[533] appears especially to take pleasure in the movements of the
dancers, catching up all their bendings and gestures, and
repeating them. One woman steps into the circle while
another vanishes, or several dance together at the same time,
but never in harmony with each other. A spectator now
passes through the circle, hurries up to one of the dancers,
who has particularly pleased him, and twines a handkerchief
round her, in which he has knotted several coins. The more
actively and coquettishly the veiled damsel dances, the more
admirers she gains, and she may leave the scene hung with
handkerchiefs. After some time the unfolded and emptied
handkerchief is unexpectedly flung to its owner by the lady,
who again appears on the scene, and who has been able to
find out, even in the darkness of night, who it was that
decorated her and made her the present.

On this occasion a dance which has a half warlike character is also executed specially for the men. The dancer is armed with a sword or a long cudgel, which, hopping and springing, bending and wheeling, he swings as gracefully as possible, with pantomimic and gently threatening movements towards the spectators. Or perhaps two dancers enter the circle, and with similar movements engage in mock combat.

CIRCUMCISION.

527 On the evening before the great day of Circumcision, the
304 "night of the henna," the women assemble. The henna
824 leaves are kneaded into a dough or paste, which is set in

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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pieces on a tray, a taper being stuck on every piece. The women move through the house in procession to an accompaniment of singing, trilling, and kettle-drum playing, the boy who is the occasion of the festival behind the henna tray. The mother and the singing-girls receive presents, the boy has a piece of the henna-paste tied into the hollow of his hand, the assembled women do the same for themselves, and all awake next morning with brownish-red palms. 527 304 824 [431]

On the day of the circumcision itself, the boy, who is now five to ten years old, is dressed in a new and costly garment, a Cashmere shawl, or it may be a woman's robe (perhaps as a sign that up to this time he has belonged to the harem), a gold-embroidered woman's cap is placed on his head, he is mounted on a horse, and rides in grand procession accompanied by musical instruments round the town. In the evening there is great feasting in his parent's house. Next morning, or on the evening after the procession, the barber performs the circumcision with a razor, an operation customary even among the ancient Egyptians. By it the boy becomes clean, and capable of performing religious exercises, of praying and entering the mosque; this religious act is, therefore, in some respects analogous to the Christian rite of confirmation. 304 [292] [783]

The circumcision of girls is performed privately, and may be guessed to have taken place when, on a customary day, girls in red holiday-clothes swarm about on the streets.

MARRIAGE.

As in the case of circumcision, the preparations for a marriage, in the shape of domestic entertainments and ceremonies, commence months before. As soon as a son exhibits the first signs of puberty his parents think of providing him with a wife. In opposition to the views of other peoples these marriages of children are considered very healthy and judicious throughout the East, even among the Christians. The parents justly believe that they thus provide for the well-being of their children. Long before puberty, which follows in their twelfth or fourteenth year, or still earlier, all the girls are given 527 582 [584] [145]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills.

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure.

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AND GAMES

A descriptive account of play situations and games will be given, starting with the play of young children and followed by that of the older. 857* 524

Young children, from three to five years, are often taken outside the house by their older brothers and sisters (more often by their sisters) who are expected to look after them. They spend most of their time watching the older children playing, and they tend to ape their movements. One often sees a three-year-old, for instance, jumping about, running from one wall to another, or throwing its hands and feet about in movements similar to those of its elders. They can also be heard trying to reproduce the words and cries uttered by the others during the course of their play. Boys from four to six take great delight in playing the engine game. They line up in one row holding each other by the back. As they go forward with quick pace, they start puffing and whistling and trying to hit those who are in their way. One also sees boys of four and five standing in a row playing the game of 'Who urinates furthest?', or urinating on the sand and watching their urine as it makes a stream of water.[1] This is usually played in the absence of any adult spectators.

This age group accompanied by their older sisters takes great interest in any flight of birds, especially in the case of 'Wad el sheikh'—Ibis—which [825] is supposed to be the fellah's friend, for it eats the worms which harm the soil and the crop. On seeing the birds overhead, the young children will twirl round and round, while their sisters clap their hands or drum rhythmically on pieces of tin. They sing together: 'Oh son of Sheikh. Give me a little loaf. Or I shall tell uncle Omara, who will beat his drum.' The children in their little song are actually asking the birds for help, threatening them, in case of failure, to tell uncle to scare them off.

All the organized games from the age of six are entirely for either boys or girls, for mixing between the two sexes never occurs in such games. In spite of the fact that certain games are preferred by younger boys, while others are played more by older boys, there is always that mingling of children of this age group (six to twelve) to a varying degree. For instance, there would be one or two older boys taking the leading part in a game mostly played by young boys.

1. One of the games which is mainly played by boys between five and eight is called 'The game of the mouse' (Li'abat al-far). A group of boys builds a heap of sand or dust around which they sit. The oldest boy is the leader and remains in control throughout the game. He calls out 'The mouse has entered', at the same time inserting his index finger into the heap, and the others immediately do likewise. When he calls out 'The mouse has come out' everyone must withdraw his finger. Any delay in responding to the leader's instructions exposes the child to hits on the body from his playmates till the leader orders them to stop.

[1] See Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood*, London, 1935, pp. 114–23, for children's play connected with the experience of urination and defaecation.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥḥaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

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F 843 821 761 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts F [716] thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *ʿafārīt*.

F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven F [853] days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F 761 895 853 825 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 853 778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 262 789 853 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

F 846 854 776 779 789 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 835 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 835 845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [792] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [152]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of 775 its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If 782 this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot 805 go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud ; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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SUPERSTITIONS

Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. F 755 [825] 776 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *ʿafrīt* into the child. To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon, when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child, and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and carries it home. F [753]

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare away the *ʿafrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but that they had been unable to do it any good! F C 755 753 776 774

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaundice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof. F 755 778

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -combings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in a fire. F 754

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

remove it, or its *ʿafrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *ʿafrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *ʿafrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F A 789 782

On pp. 189 f., 193 ff., 198, 229, 232, and 237 I speak of incense being burned, and of water being sometimes simultaneously poured out as well (p. 229), during the recitation of spells by a magician. As we learn from existing copies of the ancient Egyptian funerary liturgy and from the reliefs and paintings depicting its performance, incense was burned and water poured out at stated intervals during the recitation by the lector of the formulæ appropriate to the various episodes of which this liturgy was composed.[1]

F A 791 789

On pp. 192 ff. I describe how a magician brought a woman from a distant village to the room in which he recited the spell summoning her. Similarly, we read in *The Second Tale of Khamuas* that an Ethiopian sorcerer brought the Egyptian Pharaoh from Egypt to Ethiopia and back again to Egypt, all in the space of six hours, and that an Egyptian magician retaliated by bringing the viceroy of Ethiopia to Egypt and back again to Ethiopia in the same space of time.[2]

F A 754

Wax figures such as those mentioned on p. 197 were also used for sinister purposes in ancient Egypt.[3]

Superstitions about the evil eye evidently existed in ancient Egypt, but references to them are very rare in the literature, as has been pointed out by Dr A. H. Gardiner.[4] However, in the library of the temple of Horus at Edfu there was a book containing "spells for driving away the evil eye," and in a well-known hymn to Thōth dating from the New Kingdom occur the words: "O Thōth, if thou wilt be to me a champion, I will not fear the eye."[5]

F A [825] [789]

In connexion with the statement on p. 224 that horns of sheep and other animals are hung over doors as a charm against the evil eye, a passage in the *Pyramid Texts* might be quoted which describes how the door admitting to the royal pyramid precincts was adorned with bucrania and "sealed with two evil eyes, that Osiris may come not in this his evil coming."[6]

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On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold

[1] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. X; Part II, Pl. X, p. 20; Part III, Pls. XXI ff., pp. 29 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 55 ff..

A [113]

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 407; see also J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv, p. 209, §§ 454 f.; *A History of Egypt* (London, 1906), p. 498.

[4] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxviii, p. 128.

[5] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 306.

[6] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 26; K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, §§ 1266 f.

and every female child a brother (*akhkh*);[1] and since the sister loves her brother, this Jinn sister tries to destroy her real brother so that she may enjoy his love. And that is why whenever a mother curses her son she says to him *Ḥabbatak ukhtak* (*may your sister love you*).[2] The only object in cauterizing the child, or scarifying his head with a razor, is to punish him so that his sister may have pity on him and betake herself to her lover among the Jinn that he may leave him to them. Another group assert that "the Mother of Screeching" [*Umm Kuwaiḳ*] (i.e. the owl) was in former times a human being, and had a child with whom she was once enraged, so that she beat him so violently and painfully that he died. Then Allah punished her for that, for He changed her from human to animal form, and she has ever since so remained, enraged against the human race from which she was driven out [p. 50], and whose ruin she is constantly endeavouring to bring about, in that at sunset she passes above children, spreading her wings over them and smiting them with this disease. Some people say that one day a certain holy man struck the owl on the head with his hand to make it cease injuring people, but it would not be corrected, and that the black lines on her head are the marks of the fingers of that good man after the blow.

This practice resembles what the people of the Times of Ignorance[3] used to believe long ago in regard to the *Hāma* (a kind of owl), that when the blood of any slain person remained unavenged, there went out from his brow a *Hāma* which kept on screaming out: "Give me to drink of the slayer's blood." As the poet says:

"Oh, 'Amr neglect not my protecting and my wrong, else will I beat thee till the owl cry, 'Give me to drink.'"

[1] [Miss Blackman, *op. cit.* pp. 74–75, is seemingly wrong when she states that there is no brother (*akhkh*). Tr.]

[2] [This is another instance of the extensive belief in the *Ḳarīna* (see above p. 44). Dr. Klunzinger (formerly physician at Kosseir on the Red Sea coast) in his work, *Upper Egypt, its People and its Products* (London, 1878), deals with popular medicine on pp. 397–400. On p. 383 he writes, "Even in the official registers of deaths kept by the physicians the *ḳarīna* was till lately a regular variety of disease, exactly corresponding to our convulsions." Tr.]

[3] [The *Jāhilīya*, or Pre-Islamic days. cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, xvii, 30. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

SOME women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *ttmūs*, for which I read *kimūs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

claiming payment. Had it been in the past centuries, people would have retaliated on the "old wife." (May Allah wage war upon Ignorance !)

To protect camels from "envy," an old shoe is hung upon its temple, but I do not know the reason for this.

On the breast of a horse the tooth of a hyena is hung. This old absurdity is the custom current amongst horse-fanciers, of bedecking their steeds with this tooth which they reckon the greatest of ornaments.

On a donkey a wolf's tooth is hung.

Children have put in their hair a piece of *fāsūkh* or *jāwī*, and they hang upon their necks pieces of the bones of the eagle, or of any animal of prey, along with some shells.

It happens sometimes on a day that a milch cow refuses its milk because of some disease or other cause. So the "old wife" announces [p. 98] to them that it is "envied" and orders the placing of its halter in a forsaken grave until the cow gives milk.

As for our discourse on envy, if we suppose it to be true, then what happens daily in the provinces is not of that nature. On the contrary, they are symptoms of various diseases such as we have previously diagnosed. In most cases they are marsh fevers which arise from the water-courses and swamps surrounding the villages, and which, in the time of ploughing, are very common, especially after irrigation and the ploughing of the wheat and clover land, owing to the great putrefaction of the vegetable refuse on the land.

As for getting rid of swamps, that is a matter entrusted to the intelligent members of the community who apprehend the destruction of their own health and that of their children. In ploughing it is necessary for ploughmen to take a good square meal before undertaking the work, and to protect their heads from the influence of the sun.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirībeh* made of *būs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirībeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīneh* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] [825] [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīneh* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīneh*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīneh* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773]

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

[See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

/83 cont'd/

(c) Coptic and Islamic spirits: 776

1. Christian: "El-Nasrani" or "El-Dēr", i.e. the monastery
2. Moslem: "Si-Yousef" and "Umm-Nagdi"

Strictly speaking they are not really Coptic or Islamic spirits, because religion has nothing to do with it; we can only classify them thus, because of their names and the characters attributed to them.

There are still some Sultans which cannot be classified at the moment. Further investigation may prove that they belong to one of the above groups. These Sultans are "Katu" (8) and "Rinah".

As related before, the possessed person usually consults the Kūdiya who determines the special spirit in possession of the patient and performs a Zar in order to soothe this spirit. The offerings must be made different according to the kind of spirit. They can be summarized in the following three items: 755 782 [791]

(a) Sacrifices of birds, fowls or animals: The Sudanese Sultan requires a black sheep, a black he-goat, or two pigeons of reddish or dark blue colour. The Sultan of the Jinn demands a red cock, a red hen and a red calf. Sultan Rinah must be given a red he-goat and the Gabalawi a red rabbit, a calf or a deer from the mountains. The Arab again desires a camel etc. [825]

(b) Clothes of different kinds of material, shape and colour must be worn during the dance of the Zar-ceremony. In a Zar celebrated for the Sultan of the red Jinn, red silk clothes, red veils and a red head covering must be worn by the possessed person. For the Nasrani spirit a priestly black costume is needed. The Sudanese Sultan Zar necessitates a head-cover knitted with cowries and blue stones, a belt, bracelets worn on the upper arm and on the leg just above the ankles, and a stick all covered with cowries and blue stones. In the Sa'idi Zar a galabiah (men's gown in Egypt) and a stick are needed. For the "Askari" or "Lewa" it is best to employ a military uniform or cap, a stick in lieu of a gun, and green or red ribbons. For the "Arabi" bedouin clothes are needed etc. 755 292 776 [301]

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(8) In Sudan there is a Sultan called "Kaltum bint Nub" i.e. Kaltum the daughter of Nubia.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

15.

×539
825

The Baby Gazelle.

The gazelle is for the Arab, the prototype of tenderness and beauty. Its pasture is the stony desert ground. Who is not reminded of:

"Shoe the horse and shoe the mare,
But let the little colt go bare!"

Gidy-il-ṛazal, ya aulad,
sāriḥ wara-mmato,
sāriḥ bala markūb,
ḥefyit rigalato.

The baby gazelle, my children,
Goes behind its mother, to the pasture;
It goes to the pasture without any shoes,
With little feet bare.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

119.

The Door and the Lover.

Ya bāb, 'ul-li 'ala auwil meṣāḥibetak, 539*
ya bāb, 'albi inšabak mi' ḥubbê ṣāḥibetak, 832
ya bāb, ana kuntê gāi-lak ma' ṣiyāḥ ed-dīk, 342
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak warmīk,
5 *ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak, sibtak.*
Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Ḥalli el-'a'l sākin fīk,
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gāfik?
Ma ultê: Ya bāb, gāk ḫafsê bi-muftāḥak,
'iyūn ḥabībi terāi min bīn ilwāḥak.
10 *Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li ta'tibni,*
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma 'ultê: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtê 'alê māli,
u-lē ma 'abilt el-gamīl badri u-ha-māli,
'ul-lo, ḫalli yāfi il-mi'ad!
15 *Illi 'alê si'ān ṣauwamni 'an akl ez-zād.*
'asamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-'ām yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍā-li-b-uaṣlo ḥasakkano il-alḥād!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805] [825]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground.
5 O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, [562] at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Meccah, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events 843
in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and [842]
symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles
in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this [115]
chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant
divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. [753]
If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or [826]
abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and [262]
they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a [626]
common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[737] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Hag Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognizes that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people.

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomized in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God.

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3]

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the suppressed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347.

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located.

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends. Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

[1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [806]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

respiration he spits out the water from his mouth forcibly and 755
comes down without mishap. In most cases, however, giddiness overcomes the person, and he falls in a faint and does not get up for some time. [p. 40.]

The true treatment. Since this ailment is nought but bloodlessness, which prolongs many a long illness, its cure is comprised in taking healthy precautions such as (after the removal of the cause) the taking of iron compounds.

XXIII

THE "SEVERED" HEART

WHEN any sick person complains of weakness in his strength 753
and withering in his body after severe fevers or very depressing illnesses the "old wives" of the village diagnose his illness as "the severing of the heart." (اقطاع القلب).

The true explanation. To this they attribute causes which are 752
weaker than a spider's web, such as that the patient had in the time of his health carried something heavy for example, and they assert that the cords of the heart have been cut by [826]
this means. I know that Farag Abū Maḥmūd of the village of Munāshela in the Province of Buḥaira (he is the eczema doctor, see Part I, p. 77) cauterizes those afflicted by this ailment, burning deeply all along the vertebral canal. Often he increases his kindness and beneficence towards the patient by burning him in the navel two or three times.

XXIV

THE "SPLITTING" OF THE EYE

EVERY day we see hundreds of *fellāḥīn* complaining of inter- 164
mittent ophthalmia, especially at the beginning of the summer

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

539x
861

Bil-amān, ya-lummē,
wa-la tuḍrub aiye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana ismi Lēle?
5 *Rummān ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭarah eg-genēne.
Ana ma'āk 'and el-'āḍi
fi-hāza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe, [876]
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun. [992] [551]

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'āḍi (Qâdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage. [693]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

92.

539x

The Sweetheart as a Physician for Love-Sickness.

Magrūḥ u-kulli gurahātī,
ḥaiye hatū-li ṭabībi!
Magrūḥ bi-sinn il-lawāḥiz,
ya rabb, ḥallī-li ḥabībi.

I am wounded, full of wounds,
Up! Bring me my physician!
I have been wounded by a lance of eyes;
O Lord, grant me my beloved!

3. Literally: by the point or sharpness of the glances. The beaming eyes of the beauty pierce like arrows or lances (Vollers). [826]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

96.

An Elixir.

"If thou hadst thy happiness to buy at the cost of people's respect, the treasures revealed would carry thee through it all."

Ḥaiya, yabnē 'ammi,
wiš-balāk bil-ṛarām?
Lō šuft nchūdi,
rummān 'ala 'ādi,
5 *la-tmūt yahūdi*
wa-la 'alēkšē malām.
Lō šuft el-ḥala'
fuidni bara',
la-tšīl bil-ṛala'
10 *wa-la 'alēkšē malām.*

Up, cousin!
Why art thou so cast down with grief?
If thou couldst see my breasts,
Like pomegranates on my body,
5 Thou mightest die like a Jew,
Without being open to blame!

×539
883

5 *Wet-tōr 'al: Dauwarāni,*
amla li-sād el-'iyāni.
Win gat el-'agūz, baṭṭalāni,
taḥram 'alēye-d-doāra.

"O sāqye with the huge wheel
Have the girls come down here to thee?"
[824] "One with a head-kerchief has come down to me,
[826] Whose heel is like a cucumber."
5 And the ox said: "Drive me around,
That I may fill for the 'black-eyed'.
If, however, the old one comes, then let me halt,
For then the turning is forbidden me."

4. The comparison of the sweetheart's heels with the tenderness of a cucumber, is a delightfully characteristic notion of the Egyptian peasant. Maḥmūd understood ka'b as "heel", but I should not fail to mention the opinion of Arabists, that a very similarly sounding word (ku'b), meaning "breast", is to be read here.

6. Namely: Fill the trench for the black-eyed girls, who come to draw water.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the [286] only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a [354] window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes.

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; [826] for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red".

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the [826] breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd).

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis 'agātak,
Ya miššaḥla' min dān aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nisma' ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḥla' refers to the coquettish movements in dancing [535] and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusâra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesîm*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shawirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent

[796] [778] [826] [757] [789] [574] [805] [788] [943] [252] [521] [526]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [876] [877]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [783]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 431

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give vein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 841 [183] [581]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, the girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [757] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

861 Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to [55] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten [85] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour 85 towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before [86] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291] [192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] [774] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *karīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

Some women who are barren carry a sachet of [illegible] powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

THIS is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

1: Ammar E, 5 (1951) 1954
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her whereupon her hostess usually wraps some dry tea to take with her, 178
and the same might happen in the case of a pot or a jar which could be 574
spared, being given to the admirer. The spirit of giving away is also 431
reflected in the often-heard word 'itfaddal' (you may have it), which 556
Egyptians in general say when a person admires any of the articles of clothes, food, or any possessions.

The loosening of respect relationships is reflected in the attitude of 178
some people with regard to the learned men and the so-called 'Koran- 554
carriers'. Their absolute authority is dwindling, and one occasionally hears criticism of their knowledge compared to the 'ulema of the town. One villager once dubbed them as good for nothing except for eating during the ceremonies.

On the whole, people who have stayed for a long time working in town 178
show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the village way of life. Although 369
the majority of them feel obliged to send money to their parents, relatives, families and children, they resent the excessive demands of their relatives, and claim that towns people are free from such demands. One of the people who was working in Cairo complained to the writer that his relatives, who were supposed to be responsible for his land and sheep, did not attend to them properly while he was away. He continued, 'They only want you to give them tea and gifts on your return, and turn their backs on finding that you have not brought what they expect from you'.

The impact of urban life with its increasing pressures on the village has
resulted in more and more strains in social living. The traditional social 178
structure based on the solidarity of family and clan is losing some of its cohesive forces. The absolute authority of the old folks had been supreme, and no competition between old and young could ever be entertained. Now, the exception is not rare. The prestige and authority based on land property have also been questioned and is expressed in the common saying 'The beans are given to those who have no teeth'. With the social controls based on authority of age, power vested in the Arab councils, prestige of [626] learned men in the village, go the clash between the ideal of hospitality and economic acquisitiveness, the emphasis on family rather than the clan, and a vague search for minding one's own business.

One meets, however, those few individuals who have spent part of their 369
life in the city, criticizing some of the village ways of life such as pride in the clan or the extended family; they praise wealth rather than generosity, and individualism than family ties. Such persons are pitied by their relatives as 'being influenced by the life of "being away" ghurba' or as having 'an eye on Paradise and another on Hell'. In other words, such [828] expressions are the villagers' way of describing 'the marginal man'.[1]

Such changes of social attitudes, together with the increasing pressures 182
of economic conditions, have created an atmosphere of insecurity and 178

[1] See Everett Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, New York, 1937.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [847] [577]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the infant to social discipline as early as possible.[2] 862 [828]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father, as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

853 582 hibition of incestuous marriage between boys and girls who have been nursed from the same breast (foster brothers and sisters). A few incidents occur of women nursing other women's children, even when the mothers are alive, but only for special reasons, e.g. when the mother's milk is not sufficient, or when a mother has a thin underweight baby, giving hers to a fat mother with fat babies. The incidents are known, and the marriage taboo is observed. Yet such wet-nursing rarely occurs among close relatives, where future intermarriage of children is anticipated.

853 878 Significant, too, is the belief that character traits can be transmitted through the mother's milk. This is mainly emphasized by the mother's folk. Through the mother's milk the child becomes like his maternal uncles. 'If the child becomes like his maternal uncle, then he is worth praising, if he becomes like his father it is better to throw him in the sea.' The paternal side, while admitting the influence of the mother, teasingly imputes the unusual traits to her, while the strong traits are traced to the father's people. 'If the boy is not a good boy, two-thirds of his character is attributed to his maternal uncles; if he is a capable boy, then he has done no injustice to his father.'

However justifiable the claims may seem, the mother's milk is recognized as a very important factor in determining the child's character. The advice given to a man in search of a wife is to 'search for the maternal uncles of his children', as the boys would be like them through the influence of the mother's breast. With regard to this, Ali told me that the ancestor of the village (as well as other villages), G'afar, is of a higher rank of honour compared with Abdullah ibn al Zubair, the grandfather of another group of villages in the same province of Aswan. The reason is that though the two grandfathers are relatives of the Prophet of the same degree, yet the latter is not on the same level of honour because his mother and maternal uncles were slaves, while the former is of doubly honourable parentage. It is also said that 'as the roots spread and feed surreptitiously one has to choose the maternal uncles for his children'.

In this light, it is appropriate to discuss Granqvist's statement that the Arab families having Negro servants are afraid to let their children be wet-nursed by one of them, because they might acquire that 'unreasonable crossness' which they claim to characterize the Negroes. In Silwa the fear extends not only to Negroes, but to any strangers 'whose origin is not known', and who might interfere with the purity of the child's character by making it unstable, as homogeneous origin leads to a consistent and reliable character. To say that a certain person 'has origin' is to commend him, while saying he is a 'mixture' is to condemn his character. Evidence is seen in the fear of the villagers to have any mixture in either wet-nursing, or marriage, with the family of carpenters, potters and water-carriers. 582 Though the people of these families are lighter in skin than the villagers, and many of them comparatively well-to-do, they are considered as aliens and their origin is unknown. The case of the daughter of a village man

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood 121
affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual [858]
variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child [858]
of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being pre- [828]
cocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure 865
of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain 593
symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 130–1.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 63.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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858 to those of the adults, he is debarred from adult circles, and adult activities; and grown-ups do not expect their children to express any opinion on matters which are outside their domain. Although they are expected to orientate themselves to the same sphere of life, children are not given any significant role in the social life of the village, apart from their economic role. Until the age of twelve the children are not expected to [199] go to the mosque to say their prayers, and if they go they are allowed to sit in the back row only, and never in the front or the middle. Women and girls, however, do not go to the mosque at all in Silwa, and are not expected to do so. There is no religious sanction for this, however; Islam has enjoined mosque prayers on both sexes. Compared with the Tale child, the social sphere of the Silwa child is more restricted in many respects. In the former society, the social sphere of adults and children is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. 'Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children, or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system.'[1] In Silwa, however, although children may know about the happenings and events of the adult world in the social sphere, they are not expected to take an active part, or to show interest in them, unless they are asked to do so. On some occasions the writer heard children who, on enquiring about the guests coming to the house, or the nature of the gifts taken to relatives, or where father was going, were silenced and asked to 'mind their own business'.

• 828 Moreover, the process of 'growing-up' is believed to be affected by the character traits of the parents and close relatives on both the patrilineal and matrilineal side.[2] The belief is that the virtues and vices of the parents and their family line are transmitted, through heredity, to their offspring. Especially in the case of outstanding physical features or social characteristics, their presence is invariably accounted for by inheritance from ancestors; if not directly inherited from the parents, they could be traced to the grandfather or to the great-grandfather. Trends of character, whether of meanness, hospitality, piety, wickedness, aggression or docility, seem to run in the families. A person who deviates from what is known about his family is referred to as 'a mistake' or 'a slip', whether in praise or blame depending on the context. One hears sayings and phrases to the effect that 'so-and-so by nature is good or bad'; 'his roots are rotten'; 'nature prevails over nurture (attaba yaghlib attatbu)'; 'people are of different metals; those who were good in the pre-Islamic period, will be equally good in Islam (annas maadin), Khiyaruhum fi al-Jahiliya, khiyaruhum fi al-Islam'.

861 It must be pointed out here that the process of socialization which is strongly felt during childhood and adolescence is not only conducted through the agency of the family, both conjugal and extended, but also

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 9.
[2] See Chapter IV, concerning the child's character traits.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64-6.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Mukkadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Appendix Eleven

A NOTE ON SOME DREAMS COLLECTED IN THE VILLAGE

DREAMS are considered to be of value as a means of obtaining useful ethnological material, and thus could serve purposes similar to those of tests. The significance of dreams is hence relevant data for our study. It must be pointed out here that the writer was not fully aware of the importance of such data while he was in the field, and for this reason he did not collect enough dreams, and the ones recorded here are all those collected, without any selection.

In Silwa, women are reputed to be more capable of dreaming than men; they are also known to be better interpreters. Boys and girls do not communicate their dreams either to their parents or to other boys and girls. It was a great surprise for them to be asked to recollect dreams, and much effort was required by them to recall them.

It is believed that dreams are inspired by angels, or at least they are caused by some vaguely defined supernatural forces. The importance of dreams, especially as a means of forecasting future happenings, receives its religious justification from the story of the Prophet Joseph related in the Koran showing his infallible insight in interpreting dreams. At least, among men in the village, it is believed that the dreams of a person who sleeps ritually clean are truer than those of one who is not in the same state.

As in Tikopia, the weight attached to a dream varies according to the intensity of the personal situation at the time; a dream receives more credence in so far as it can be related to some question immediately at issue.[1] When a person is in a critical situation, e.g. financial difficulty, absence of a son, expecting decision in a law suit, or in the case of a pregnant woman, he or she does not only pay considerable attention to dreams, but asks relatives and friends to dream for him or her. On their part, such relatives and friends volunteer to tell such a person about dreams in which he or she may appear.

There is a certain formal technique of interpreting dreams, especially amongst women, which the writer did not investigate. The narration of

[1] Raymond Firth, 'The Meaning of Dreams in Tikopia', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, ed. by E. Evans-Pritchard *et al.*, London, 1934, p. 63.

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APPENDIX XII

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PASS-ALONG

I.Q.	Frequency		
	boys	girls	total
30–39	1	3	4
40–49	0	1	1
50–59	0	2	2
60–69	0	8	8
70–79	3	8	11
80–89	1	9	10
90–99	11	2	13
100–109	11	10	21
110–119	8	3	11
120–129	2	1	3
130–139	1	0	1

For the results of test I the following remarks may be made concerning the interpretive significance of its scores.

1. As far as this small group of thirty-one boys and girls (with an average chronological age of eleven years eight months for boys, and eleven years four months for girls) is concerned, the results fall below the average norm of intelligence compared with urban children on whom the test was standardized.

2. The distribution in the sample, however, roughly follows the normal distribution.

3. Comparing boys and girls, the latter tend to have slightly higher scores on the whole than the boys.

For the results of tests II and III one notes that:

1. Unless the sample of test I happens to be of low intelligence (an assumption for which there is no apparent justification except the small number) tests II and III appear to be better tests than test I. In these tests children, including the sample in test I, have scored average and even superior I.Q.s. In test III, especially in the case of boys, the curve shows a skew towards the superior I.Q. tendency.

3. Boys on the whole have better scores in these performance tests than girls. In the Porteus Maze test only three girls out of sixty-three are above the average (100), while thirteen boys out of sixty-four fall above the average. In the Pass-along test the area representing boys of average or above average I.Q. is larger than that of the girls.

It is to be noted here that one of the boys who is mentally deficient and could not handle the test problems of the performance tests at all, is called Shaikh' (saint) by the rest of the school children. Among the adults there

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 Among the adults there

are in the village four people who may be considered by psychologists as insane or mentally deficient but are regarded as possessing a 'saintly touch'. However, the use of these three types of intelligence tests tends to indicate, apart from the difficulty of sampling, that the children have an intelligence of the practical type. The nature of the performance tests is perhaps nearer to the problems of their serious activities of everyday life. On the whole they scored better in Pass-along than Porteus.

It is worth mentioning that some of the children who came out well in the performance tests did very badly with the verbal test, and this could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the children with the intellectual items of the latter. Apart from the mathematical items, this unfamiliarity could be demonstrated by item 8, Section 1. In it, the child is asked: 'If you want to give your mother a present what will you choose: a skipping rope, a toy, a silk stocking or a bicycle?' Although the obvious answer according to the test is 'silk stocking', which some children gave, others gave 'a skipping rope' or 'a bicycle' while none chose a toy. On asking a boy why he chose a bicycle, he answered that after giving it to his mother he would take it back for himself. Some of those who chose the rope thought that it was a useful thing for mother as she 'would hang the washing on it'. The difference of value-attitudes implied in such items and their influence on answers given, is similar to that classical example given by Klineberg with regard to one of the items of the 'National Intelligence Test' which was administered to some children of an Indian tribe. In this item the subject is presented with the words: crowd, closeness, danger, dust, excitement, number, and is asked to underline only two words which are the necessary characteristics of the crowd. Although 'closeness and number' are the correct answers according to the key of the test, yet many of the Indian children underlined danger and dust and in other cases excitement. According to their own logic and experience these answers seem to be the right ones.[1]

In our case the results of testing by a verbal test brings out the validity of applying tests standardized for urban children to rural children. By no means all the children who took the Kabbani test are mentally deficient, but the test itself is overweighted with items that are more suitable to city children, and may fail to sample adequately those abilities in which the rural children excel. In the United States and Britain studies of urban-rural differences in intelligence have revealed that rural children are neither uniformly nor consistently inferior to urban children on all tests.[2] Our small-scale testing tends to confirm the conclusion that while rural children score low in tests of abstract intelligence, they may excel in tests of the mechanical or practical type.

Although doubts could be cast on the quantitative results of tests that are not standardized for a particular community, such tests could be used

[1] Otto Klineberg, *Race and Psychology*, Unesco, Paris, 1951, p. 11.
[2] A. Anastasi and J. Foley, *Differential Psychology*, New York, 1949, pp. 825–7.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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'AFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *'omdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *'afārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *'afārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *'afārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *'afārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *'afārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *'afrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳandīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *'afrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *'afrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

4:Wilker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

" WHEN the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *ṯabb*, together with *fāsūkh* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: ' Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Faḳīh*[1] of their village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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life of the villagers—religion. Next to the mosques in appearance and cleanliness are some of the shops and stores. These must have a minimum standard of building requirements, according to official regulations. On the north side of the village stand the police station, the post office and the elementary school. As to the fields, they extend to the west of the railway road up to the Nile bank, where the water-pumping works, established in 1932, stands with its modern buildings and garden and electric light.

It is worth mentioning here that each of the ten villages constituting the administrative unit of Silwa has its own name and is separated from its neighbours, however close these may be, by a recognized boundary, e.g. a high mound, a valley, or a stretch of gravel or sand. Each of these villages (or two villages combined, as in the case of four of the villages) has its mosque and village saint tomb with a cemetery attached to it. In spite of the fact that all the villages attached to Silwa trace their origin to one ancestor, as will be discussed later, their spatial separation is associated with sub-divisions in their kinship relations.

The physical characteristics of the inhabitants of these villages show a considerable degree of homogeneity. With their dark skins and long heads, they seem to conform to the ancient Southern Egyptian type.[1] All the inhabitants of Silwa, however, take great pride in describing themselves as descendants of Arab stock related to the Prophet. They refer to their traditions and customs and even their dress as 'Arabian'. Whether their claim is true or not, the belief is of central importance as one of the cohesive forces in the village community, and it is the means by which the villagers, especially the older generation, distinguish their way of life from that of others.[2]

The rhythm of daily life in Silwa hardly varies. The crack of dawn witnesses the muazzin calling for morning prayers; youths and men, mounted on their donkeys or camels, call on each other to climb the hills to fetch the fertilizer. By sunrise, most men and boys are heading towards the fields with their cattle and tools; and by broad daylight the village seems

[1] A. Batrawi, who has studied the physical anthropology of Egyptians, maintains that there is some justification for the usual division of Egypt into Upper and Lower Regions as far as the cephalic index is concerned. The people of Upper Egypt have longer but narrower heads, and longer fingers, feet and forearms than those of Lower Egypt. His study of the living samples of modern Egyptian population from all over Egypt suggests that they conform more closely to the Ancient Southern type. Moreover, the distribution of blood groups in present-day Egypt shows that the mass of the population is very homogeneous and there are no significant differences in this respect between the Moslems and the Copts. 'The Racial History of Egypt, Part II—Relationships of the Ancient and Modern Population of Egypt and Nubia', in *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVI, 1946, pp. 131–35.

[2] Arab genealogies must be accepted with great caution. The notion of the Arabs as a conquering race, known for their gallantry, honour and power, played effectively on the minds of the indigenous stock of the fellaheen, who showed an earnest desire to be considered members of that race. Many fellaheen have succeeded in linking themselves to an Arab tribe. A. Ammar, *The People of Sharqiya* (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester University), pp. 13–21.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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and social exchange. Each of the two sections is supposed to be characterized by certain attributes; the Musiab being renowned for their boasting and self-pride, and heavy-built members, while the 'Onab are reputed to be comparatively stingy and much inclined to gossip. 616

There are no formal heads of clans but there are natural leaders who are spontaneously appointed on occasions from the oldest members. The distinctive hallmark of every clan is its guest house, where the adult members of the clan have their communal meals during the fasting month of Ramadan, receive a common guest, settle disputes, meet for ordinary gossip and can celebrate their feasts, ceremonies and funerals. On one hand, the clans are aware of their integral identity; and on the other hand, they are aware that they are linked together by a common ancestor forming the unity of the village. 613

Silwa Kibli (Southern Silwa) and its neighbouring villages are inhabited by the descendants of 'Ayyash the third brother of 'On and Musa. This genealogical relationship is the explanation given to the similarities in customs and traditions between the two parts of Silwa Kibli and Silwa Bahari. 619 63 84 829

The genealogical pattern goes on to repeat itself still further to include and explain the relations and similarities in the larger socio-geographic region extending throughout the whole province. Apart from the towns 'where people are mixed', most of the villages of this region are inhabited by either the G'afra or 'Ababda. While the G'afra are the descendants of G'afar al-Sadik whose great-grandfather was the grandson of the Prophet, the 'Ababda are the descendants of 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubair who belonged to the Kuraish clan, the Prophet's clan, but was not so close in kinship or favour to the Prophet. The G'afra consider themselves more hospitable than the 'Ababda; and they are also distinguishable as farmers, while the 'Ababda, even if they are farmers at present, were originally camel-drivers.

Moreover the G'afra region is divided into two parts: those villages lying along the eastern bank of the Nile are descendants of Bahr (amongst whose sons were 'On, Musa and 'Ayyash), while those stretching along the western bank of the Nile are the descendants of Buhair, the brother of Bahr. The diagram overleaf represents the ramification of kinship in the region of G'afra and Silwa. 361

It is clear from this that not only the village, but the whole region represents a ramified genealogical tree, having one main trunk. It is also significant that this ramification is related to the branching off of brothers who were not in agreement, e.g. in the division of East and West in the whole region, in the division of the two parts of Silwa (South and North) and in the division of Silwa itself into two sections. This could be taken as a recognition of a deep-seated cultural expectation of brothers' discord, in spite of the highly idealized expectation of fraternal solidarity. 593

The genealogical pattern, based on the unilateral descent, repeats itself

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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community marked with the lowest degree of isolation and homogeneity was characterized by the highest degree of individualization, secularization, and disorganization, and conversely.[1]

This hypothesis of the historical phases of culture change has stimulated other anthropologists to test it. Sol Tax, examining the hypothesis in the light of his Guatemalan data, was led to make a distinction between two aspects of culture that would cut across Redfield's framework. With regard to the world view and the beliefs about nature and man, the Guatemalan Indians are of the primitive type, while in their kind of social relations they are of the civilized type. He maintains that the interrelationships of the folk-life characteristics as found in Yucatan do not necessarily repeat themselves in every folk society. The Guatemalan Indians, unsophisticated, homogeneous in beliefs and practices, are mobile, having relationships of the impersonal type, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, with familial organization weak, and with life secularized.[2]

It was also pointed out that Max Weber has shown how capitalistic commercialism could, and did, go hand in hand with piety in the case of the Protestants and the Puritans. Under certain conditions of literate, and at least partly urbanized, society, a culture may be both highly commercial and sacred as in the case of the Jewish history.[3]

In the light of these findings, Silwa community fits rather with Redfield's characteristics of the folk society. Silwa is a comparatively isolated community, as it lies at a distance of about thirty miles from both Edfu and Kom Ombo, the nearest urban centres to the north and south respectively, while more than seven hundred miles separates it from Cairo. On the other hand, it is less isolated than other village communities in the sense that there is a Post Office, a Railway Station (at which express trains do not stop), as well as a Police Station. It is also less isolated in that it has a weekly market, to which people from surrounding villages and traders from nearby towns come to buy and sell their goods.

The villagers are, on the whole, relatively immobile, a phenomenon that makes face to face relationships loom large in the folk society. The attachment to their locality is also associated with a sectional pride in their origin, which embraces the various villages of G'afra, and explains to them the differences between their customs and traditions and those of other regions. The villagers refer to themselves as well as to other Moslems by the term 'nation of Moslems' (ummat-al-muslimeen), and feel that they are Arabs first and foremost. One occasionally sees pictures of Imam Ali and his sons, Hassan and Hussein, Abu-zeid-al-Hilali, decorating some houses, especially of newly married couples. For the villagers, the world is

[1] Robert Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, pp. 360, 362.
[2] Sol Tax, 'World View and Social Relations in Guatemala', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII, 1941, pp. 27–42.
[3] Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, 1947, p. 308.

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VIII

INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS. THE LAW OF REVENGE

THE Egyptian *fellāḥīn* are by no means a military people, but in their inter-village fights, which are not of infrequent occurrence, they sometimes display a quite surprising ferocity. It must be remembered that to the Egyptian peasant his own village is the centre of the universe, and people of other villages, though treated with hospitality and courtesy as visitors, are, in some cases, looked upon with as much suspicion as if they were positive aliens. As will be seen later on, hostilities between adjacent villages were no less a marked feature of Egyptian life in antiquity than at the present day.

The inhabitants of some mutually hostile villages hardly ever meet without at least attempting to pick a quarrel, and I have been myself a spectator of such conflicts on more than one occasion. In most parts of the world it is usually found that the market-place is neutral ground, and that there even the most antagonistic peoples will meet unarmed. In some parts of Egypt, however, not only is the market-place the site regularly chosen for village conflicts, but fights which take place there are by no means confined to non-market-days! Various weapons (Figs. 57 and 58) are used at these inter-village encounters. The commonest are the *nabbūt* (a very stout single-stick), a primitive type of spear, and a battleaxe. The spear consists of a long wooden shaft terminating in a slender iron point or in a plain or barbed leaf-shaped blade. The axe is a long pole surmounted by a winged iron head. Stones too are used, and are thrown with deadly effect.

The first battle of this kind that I witnessed took place in connexion with the sinking of a large boat in a canal, the muddy bottom of which held it fast. An attempt had to be made to raise the vessel, to which two strong ropes were attached by divers. Large crowds had collected on either side of the canal, and the services of some of these people were enlisted in the efforts to raise the boat, but most of them, like myself, were mere spectators.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [178] [84] [847]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue.

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them.

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1]

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa.

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation.

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- Analyst]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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882 functions and the impact of this standardization on the basic personality structure and social institutions.[1] In the light of this statement, the social disciplines connected with sexuality are relevant data, and according to Kardiner, of great significance in understanding the basic personality structure and in explaining partly the nature of primary institutions.

It seems that in Silwa the process of socialization is similar in many points to that amongst the Tallensi and the Samoans, with regard to the continuity of the inculcated social norms and the spheres of adult and child activities.[2] Unlike many Western societies, youth in Silwa do not express in their attitudes that sense of being torn between youthful autonomy and parental insistence on dependence. This problem does not seem to be disturbing to parents and would seem abhorrent to youth who like to demonstrate their allegiance to their family and clan. Even if such desire for autonomy is occasionally expressed by boys, who on disagreement with their parents desert them for some relatives in another village or go to town to work, this is considered to be the exception, and of course such a desertion can never be entertained by girls. The lack of such strong desire could be explained by the security the youth derives from his status in his family and his need to be married by his parents.

Psychologically, however, adolescent boys, and more so adolescent [150] girls, impressed the writer as being on the whole timid, apprehensive and withdrawn. These traits stand out more clearly if compared with children's groups. Attitudes of initiative, self-assertion and drive seem to be the exception [illegible] adolescent behaviour.[3] In attempting to account for such general characteristics, the writer does not claim them to be the negative phase of the adolescent stage. He attributes their striking appearance to the cumulative effect of the severe social disciplines, and especially those connected with sex. The maturing of sex functions at this stage is noted [831] with great embarrassment, shame and feeling of guilt by adolescents. As mentioned before, complete hush and excessive secrecy prevails over sexual matters among adolescents as well as adults. This seems to contrast sharply with free bodily gratification given to the infants. There is no word for masturbation in the villagers' dialect. Sexual pleasure of any kind outside the marriage tie is condemned by the text of the Koran, as mentioned earlier.

[834] Manifestations of this excessive repression and fear of sex are obvious in the veiling of adolescent girls and women and the hiding of the breast

[1] Richard T. Sollinberger, 'The Concept of Adolescence', in *The Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 36, 1939, pp. 600–1. A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*.

[2] For adolescence and puberty as treated in different societies, see also Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Chapter II.

[3] This is the writer's general impression and could only be substantiated by comprehensive recording of the behaviour of adolescents. According to Fortes, however, 'for most problems of social anthropology, variations are of minor importance as compared with the "typical". For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance.' *Patterns of Culture*, p. 8.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951). 1954
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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [533]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND.

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married 592
son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit.

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he 584
deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price.
If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will
try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neigh-
bours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be [831]
fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant
of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed 582
sixteen as the age of marriage (").

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of 583
marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must 584
offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds
down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn
up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*.

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-
town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-
dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for
furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a
tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured
chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will
also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or
two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride 585
leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these
things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and
paraded round the village. The young girls go before and
after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers
admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the
afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride.
A crowd of women and children press into the room to see
how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed [302
her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been 789]
reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order
to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession
can now begin.

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a
camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives
go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the
air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) [152]
alternate with songs from the women.

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (67)

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant home life, a good table, light company — these are things beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. They are material, but not materialistic. They believe wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (68) *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
789 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

840 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies,
878 after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
• 931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his 831
life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, 755
over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is 778
blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." 751
The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and [164]
fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a 842
person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Ḳalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

great many cases the separation is only temporary, the husband and wife make up their quarrel and come together again without any farther formalities than the consent of the kadi. When the severest form of divorce has been pronounced, however, namely, with the formula of threefold repudiation, a reunion becomes not such an easy matter. For such cases there exists the well known and peculiar law of the *mostahill* (literally "permission-maker"). A third person has formally to marry the divorced woman and put her away again, whereupon the husband can again take back his former wife. Men who are endowed with the minimum of personal advantages are usually selected to act as these middle men, and they are paid for their welcome services. Cases of this sort are certainly rare, being considered disgraceful. It sometimes happens also that the pair joined in this momentary marriage take each other's fancy, the intermediary will not give up the woman joined to him, and no power can tear them asunder if they do not wish it. The law just mentioned is said to be founded on the awakening of jealousy. 586 587

The man of the middle and lower ranks who has more than one wife usually has his harem, with children and attendants, in different houses, or in different portions of the same house specially constructed for the purpose; and in order to give satisfaction to all parties, a good polygamous husband eats and sleeps in regular alternation, the one day in the house of one wife, the next in that of another. These look upon themselves as relatives, and from time to time pay each other at least ceremonial visits. Indeed there are a great many examples of several wives living together peacefully, obediently, and free from jealousy. Of quarrels arising from jealousy much less is heard than one would have beforehand assumed. By his supreme powers the husband maintains order, and jealousy frequently takes even the form of a praiseworthy struggle how each wife may appear more amiable in the eyes of her husband than her rivals. Most women give up from the first the idea of requiring their husband to remain true to them, and jealous women are even laughed at by their female friends. The ideal romantic love 595 [831]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[831] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional
165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellanin MK13
Silwa

be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [849] [847]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

and with them it is possibly a racial mark, but the following information was given to me by an Egyptian woman whom I questioned on the subject. Among the *fellāḥīn* the notches are cut when there is supposed to be something wrong with the inside of a child's mouth, and the operation is performed in babyhood. A midwife acts as the surgeon in such cases. She cuts the notch, or notches, with a pair of scissors, and the blood from the wound is rubbed on the roof of the child's mouth. If the mouth is very bad more than one notch is cut.

Long hair is certainly considered a woman's glory in Egypt, though I have rarely, if ever, seen really thick, long hair among the *fellāḥīn* women and girls. However, this defect is easily remedied, and every woman buys long plaits of false hair, which hang down far below her waist. She cuts her hair short on either side of her face, and forms this short hair into flat curls against her cheeks. Over her head she ties a silk or cotton kerchief, a brightly coloured one if she is young, a more sombre one if she has passed her youth, and this keeps the side curls in position. The hair is not dressed every day, but when it is done a double wooden comb is used (Fig. 26), with fine and coarse teeth. The centre of the comb is usually decorated with coloured designs.

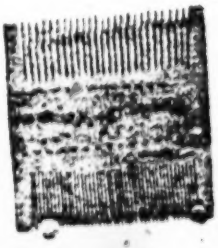

FIG. 26. DOUBLE WOODEN COMB

The long plaits worn by the peasant women are utilitarian as well as decorative. The house-door key is often attached to one of the plaits when the housewife goes off either to shop or to the fields, while from the others hang various charms, some of which are enclosed in small leather cases. One woman I know wore a charm against headache enclosed in a leather case, and also a large opaque bead to keep her husband's love and to make his mother pleased with her. Both these charms were attached to one of her plaits, and she gave me the bead after her husband died.

When a woman becomes a widow she immediately conceals the side curls; in fact, no hair must be seen round her face—it is tucked away under a dark blue or a black kerchief. She wears it like this all her life, unless she remarries, in which case the curls

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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form of hair-cutting for very young boys is dealt with in the following chapter.

After a death the male relatives of the deceased will often allow the hair on the face and head to grow for some time as a sign of mourning.

An Egyptian woman who fears that her facial beauty is beginning to fade, and who wishes to obliterate lines on her face and to obtain a nice pink complexion, will proceed in the following way. She takes a quantity of sugar and a little alum, and boils them together in a small quantity of water till the concoction becomes thick and brown like toffee; the pan is then removed from the fire. When the toffee-like substance is cool enough she takes some of it and pinches it up between her fingers and thumb and applies it to her face, where it sticks; she then pulls it off. She massages the whole of her face in this way, or she may get a friend to do it for her (see Fig. 27), till the skin becomes very pink and also the soft, downy hairs are pulled out. Her husband, on coming home, will admire her complexion and be 'pleased' (*mabsūṭ*) with her, and the woman herself will thus be gratified. I know a woman who, in order to excite her husband's admiration, treats her face in this way every day! After being thus massaged the face is washed with pink soap, and then a pink powder may also be applied. Many of the vainer of the peasant women regularly make use of this treatment in order to beautify themselves. I have myself seen the face

FIG. 27. WOMAN HAVING HER FACE MASSAGED

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

584 I HAVE already stated that girls at a very early age dress themselves up in order to attract attention to themselves and so secure a husband. These children are often married to quite [582] elderly men, old enough to be their fathers or even their grandfathers. Such disparity in age is most unsuitable, and frequently leads to great unhappiness. In their attempts to obtain husbands the girls are aided and abetted by their mothers, who resort to magic and trickery of all sorts to secure a desirable man. The two following incidents, which occurred while I was in Egypt in 1926, illustrate a device often employed by women who want to catch a man, either for themselves or for one of their daughters.

832 A certain woman living in a village in Middle Egypt was walking out one day when her glance fell on a young man (Fig. 41) to whom she took a great fancy, and who, she thought, would make an excellent husband for her daughter. She therefore went to a magi- [789] cian and begged him to write a charm, which she buried under the threshold of her house. She then persuaded one of her male relatives to bring the young man to her house on the pretext that he desired his company when he went thither on some business matter. The young man acceded to this request, and the elder man, who knew the exact spot where the charm was buried, stood at the door of the woman's house in such a position that his companion, when he entered, must step over the buried charm. The girl made some coffee for the two visitors, and either brought it in herself or allowed the young man to get a glimpse of her in some other way. The youth then went home, and on the way there began to think of the girl whom he had seen, and to desire her as his wife. By the time he reached home he wanted her still more, and by the evening was quite mad about her, refusing to eat or sleep, and saying that he must have the girl as his wife. I saw him several times after this, and he was in a most forlorn and love-sick condition, imploring me to intercede with his father, who was not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired. 832

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is betrothed, pay a large sum of money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

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[142] [291]

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young unmarried girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed 581 832

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

●832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government employés who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [882] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is 584 prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the 585 daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 492 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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887 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree,
586 they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former
584 marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

791
832
[29]
431
152

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

E 791 787 789

When a magician is called in to find hidden treasure he goes at night to the ground where the treasure is said to be hidden, and he sweeps the whole plot to get rid of impurities, afterward sprinkling it with water. When this is done he lights a fire in which he burns some of the feathers of a hoopoo. The whole ceremony is repeated two or three nights in succession. On the third night the magician cuts a cross with a knife the whole length and breadth of the selected site. On the knife are inscribed the letters of the King of *alif*, these letters representing the servants of the King. (I should explain here that each letter of the alphabet, of which *alif* is the first, is said to have a king attached to it.) The magician now brings branches from four different trees—*i.e.*, olive, pomegranate, apricot, and tamarisk (*ṭarfā*). These four branches are stuck into each outer point of the cross, and are brought together at the upper ends like a tent. Then he takes a branch from a young palm-tree that has not yet borne any fruit. The length of this palm-branch must measure from the magician's elbow to the tips of his fingers, plus the length of his hand. The upper ends of the four branches mentioned above having been tied together, the branch from the palm-tree is tied horizontally across them, its leaves being stripped off, leaving only the mid-rib. On either side of this mid-rib the magician writes the letters belonging to the two kings of fire, water, air, and dust—for each of these has two kings, one an *'afrīt*, the other a heavenly being. Then he will watch the branch to see in which direction it will bend. If it bends toward the right he will shift all the four branches which are stuck in the ground in that direction—*i.e.*, toward the right—and again watch the horizontal mid-rib. He will repeat this process until he gets to a spot where the mid-rib of the palm-branch remains absolutely horizontal and motionless, when he knows he has arrived at the exact spot under which the treasure lies concealed.

E [776]

E [776]

F C [832]

FIG. 115. CHARMS WORN BY A WOMAN TO KEEP HER HUSBAND'S LOVE

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLAḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

832 754 If a man loves a woman and wants to marry her, and she has no affection for him, he asks a female friend to assist him in the following way. The friend visits the woman at a time when she is likely to be combing her hair. It is the custom for women to conceal all their hair-combings in the wall of one of the rooms, between the bricks. The friend notices where the woman puts her hair-combings, and, at the first opportunity, steals some of the hair when the owner is not present, and gives it to the man. He takes it to a magician, who measures the length of each hair by the span of his hand. The magician then writes a spell, and, going to a grave, puts the hair inside it, keeping the spot a secret, for no one must know where the hair is hidden. He puts the spell in his pocket, and on some pretext or other (he may ask her for a cup of coffee, for example) visits the house of the woman whose hair he has buried. While he is sitting in her house he will produce the paper on which he has written the spell, and tell her to wear it [789] under her arm, stating that it will afford her excellent protection in the event of anyone else writing a spell against her to prevent her marrying. He thus persuades her to accept his spell, hinting that it may also bring her a good husband. The woman, of course, has no idea that the magician is in league with the man who wants to marry her. She accordingly accepts the spell, hangs it round her neck, and, immediately becoming madly in love with the man who is in love with her, is, of course, only too glad to marry him! This is a very common practice in many parts of Egypt.

754 789 It is also the custom to protect houses from the evil eye, and various decorations are employed for this purpose. Sometimes a plate or saucer is plastered into the wall just above the main entrance, or pieces of old carving, picked up from an ancient rubbish-mound, may be let into the masonry round about the door. The horns of sheep and other animals are also hung over the doorway as a charm to protect the house from the evil eye. A 'bride of the corn,' as already stated,[1] is hung over the front door for the same purpose. Inside the house, on the walls of the living-rooms, I have seen painted designs which the owner told me were put there to keep off the evil eye. Indeed, the devices resorted to for protecting houses, fields, animals, and people of all ages against this dreaded power are multitudinous, and to describe all those that I am acquainted with would require an entire book.

[1] See p. 172.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 304

priesthood.[1] A relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Saḳḳāreh[2] depicts the circumcision of two boys, the operation being performed, anyhow in one case, by a funerary priest (*ḥm-kî*, "servant of the *ka*"). I mention on p. 88 that, when the barber is about to cut off the foreskin, the boy is taken hold of and told not to be afraid. In the above-mentioned relief one of the operators is represented as saying: "Hold him, do not let him move about [?]," to which the assistant replies: "I will do your bidding."

F A 582

I refer on pp. 43, 47, and 90 to the early age at which modern Egyptian girls of the peasant class are often married. In Roman times we know that boys of fifteen married girls of twelve and thirteen.[3]

F A 832 754 789

Charms to win love (pp. 90 ff., 224), and also to separate a man from his wife (*cf.* pp. 190 ff.), were employed in ancient Egypt, and examples of such are preserved in magical papyri dating from the Roman age.[4]

A 584 585

We possess a number of ancient Egyptian marriage contracts (*cf.* p. 92). The two earliest date from the reign of Takelōthis I or II, of the Twenty-second Dynasty (895–874 or 860–834 B.C.),[5] the rest mostly from Ptolemaic times.[6] A perfectly preserved marriage contract dating from the reign of the last native Egyptian Pharaoh, Nektanebos, was published a few years ago by Dr Junker.[7] As it is quite complete and as no English translation of it has ever appeared, I think the following may perhaps interest my readers:

> Year 15, second month of the season of Inundation, of Pharaoh Nektanebos (may he live, prosper, and be happy!): The *msḥ*[8] of Edfu, who belongeth to the Wall of Nektanebos,[9] Usir'an, son of Eskhons, whose mother is Tentmehet, saith to the lady Taubasti, daughter of Eskhons, whose mother is Tamunis: I have made thee my wife, I have given thee $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, making $2\frac{1}{2}$ staters, making again $\frac{5}{10}$ of a *deben* of silver, as thy woman's gift.[10] If I abandon thee as wife [*i.e.*,

A [113]

[1] See Herodotus, ii, 36 f., 104; G. Elliot Smith and Warren R. Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, p. 93; A. M. Blackman, "Priest, Priesthood (Egyptian)" in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 299 f.

[2] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pl. LXVI.

[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 180.

[4] F. Lexa, *La magie dans l'Egypte antique* (Paris, 1925), vol. ii, pp. 139 ff.

[5] G. Möller, *Zwei ägyptische Eheverträge aus vorsaitische Zeit* (Berlin, 1918).

[6] See F. Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1909), vol. iii, pp. 114 ff., 139 ff.

[7] H. Junker, *Papyrus Lonsdorfer I* (Vienna, 1921).

[8] Unknown title.

[9] Either a fort built by Nektanebos or a quarter of the town newly founded by him.

[10] See F. Ll. Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 114, note 8.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigâb*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhdar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

Whenever the *Atr* is brought to him he takes it in his two hands 787
leaving between them a distance which he measures with his 791
finger to begin with, then after that he begins mumbling and 755
exorcising, while placing the *Atr* near his mouth. Then when he has finished this he measures it a second time, and so on. Then he informs the messenger that the *Atr* has increased and that it is a prognostic of a speedy cure and a long life. Beyond 755
this nothing will result unless by the writing of a talisman. 789
One cannot avoid observing here that the *Faḳīh* looks out for the state of the mother of the patient. If he sees her weeping and in distress, and she has told him of the violence and continuance of the patient's illness, then after the second measuring he tells her that the *Atr* has not increased, and that it is necessary to write a talisman (*ḥigāb*) from which will result every advantage and blessing (*baraka*) for the patient. Then if the patient is cured, his people afterwards say that he was cured only through the talisman of the Faḳīh; but if he dies, they say that the *Atr* did not increase, and the *Faḳīh*, whatever happens, is regarded by them as truthful.

XVII

[p. 41] "THE TIED" (AL-MARBŪṬ)

By this is meant that some quacks skilled in the knowledge of 759
spirits are hired by certain individuals to "prescribe" against 832
their enemies "*tying*," that is, impotence in time of coition. The truth of the matter is that since pudicity and perplexity are special properties of some men, they sometimes assert their mastery in the days of wedlock. So that the bridegroom believes that this is simply the result of what some quack doctor has done. And what increases the illusion in its effect on him is that he has listened since childhood to such tales of "*tying*," and believed in this absurd "art."

And as for the manner of releasing the "*Tied*," it is as

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

and place him on the back of a she-ass having its feet tied, so that the back of the sick should coincide with the back of the ass, and one of the " doctors " beats her while the other holds the head of the patient. Then the she-ass jumps violently. It is said that there is mighty healing in her. One of the " sagacious ones " enlarged upon the success of it in his case once. When I asked him concerning the diagnosis of his disease at that time, I knew that a kidney-stone had stopped in his *Ḥālib* [p. 89] (i.e. the canal that conducts the urine from the kidneys into the urinary bladder) so the leaping of the ass helped its rolling and slipping.

But the leaping of the ass is no use in colic of the stomach or of the colon, or inflammation of the spinal marrow.

XLV

TONICS FOR THE VENEREAL FACULTY

THE seeds which are matrimonial tonics and incitements to coition and whose secrets they spread abroad in cities, and which many simpletons and rich people who pay their prices at recognized rates, rush to purchase from them, are all aids to the destruction of health, hastening on ruin. They are not of the least use for the object aimed at by these foolish people, nay, the result is the opposite of that, as those, who serve Science by experience assert (in spite of their being deceived at first by errors). And we do not know that true Materia Medica mentions drugs which prolong the time of propagation or strengthen the venereal faculty, unless some false opinions of certain Westerners which are considered like the opinions of " quacks " in our country.

They have said that the injection of a solution of the testicles of a fox and the Indian pig is advantageous, but experience contradicts this.

[p. 91.] And they may believe that the dye of Spanish flies[1]

[1] [*lit.* Indian flies.]

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

Some women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *timūs*, for which I read *kimūs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aswānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

The manner of the act was (for the *Shaikha*) to go with the unfortunate woman, whose husband had been turned from her, to a region far from sight where the " operator " (*mushabshiba*) dyes her face and her hands with a black substance and puts on black clothing, and lets her hair down upon her shoulder and grasps in her hand three fruits. Then she takes the " patient " (*mushabshab lahā*) by her side and burns incense, placing in it *hashīsh* and *'anzarūt* (or *Anzarūt*)[1] and *mansir* (?) or *mānistir* (?) and *faḥīsala* (I do not know its real medical name). Thereafter she says :

Yā 'afārīt yā 'afārīt	Oh, Spirits ! Oh, Spirits !
Yā ginn al-gibāl	Oh, Jinn of the Mountains !
Yā sukkān al-buhūr	Oh, dwellers of the seas !
Yā 'ummār al-burūr	Oh, inhabitants of lands !
Yā bu'ād fi'l-barrīya	Oh, far off folk in the desert !
Yā ḳātilīn al-darrīya[2]	Oh, slayers of offspring !
Yā mukhālifīn Sulīmān	Oh, oppcnents of Solomon[3]
Yā mubarṭi'īn fi'l-widyān	Oh, gallopers in valleys !

I cry to you. Come to me, and help me with the stars of the sky.

Then it is said that the atmosphere becomes dusty and the day is changed to night, and the darkness becomes intensified, while she continues her spell, saying :

Good evening to you, oh, stars of evening ! Oh, yellow ones like apricots ! I have smitten him with three fruits (*thamarāt*) smite ye him with three live coals (*jamarāt*). (Thereupon she names the person in the case, and casts the fruits upon an image [p. 5] of the person made of clay which is in front of her). One ember will come upon his eyes so that he will see none but her [i.e. his forsaken wife] ; and an ember upon his tongue so that he will speak with none but her ; and an ember upon his ears so that he will listen to none but her. Good

[1] [Gum of a thorny tree that grows in the mountains of Persia. See the *Tadhkara* of Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī, s.v. According to Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires arabes*, it is *trifolium odoratum*. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. *al-Dharriya*.]

[3] [These are the Jinn who, according to Moslem legends, were forced to assist King Solomon in his works of magic. Tr.]

evening to you, oh, our new moon! you whose father is Friday [the Moslem holy day], and whose mother is the Festival! Oh, Glorious Venus with the wakeful eyes! Take for me from the hair of so and so, the son of so and so, three hairs. Pull them off and mix them and bring them and leave them at the door of so and so the daughter of so and so. Good evening to you, oh, Sindās! (Sindās is said to be the name of the god of lust and debauchery). Oh, Sindās! Oh, Knower of secrets and of . . . (here she names a certain organ of the fair sex, which it is not allowable to mention). (At the same time the Shaikha uncovers her genital organs and brings one of her shoes and beats that organ seven times until its "servant," who is named Sindās, as mentioned above, appears). Oh, Sindās! You have helpers! Oh, Sindās! Where are your brethren! Bring him and bind him and at her door release him! (And hereupon she orders the "patient" to recite the special charm for the purpose, as follows:)

Gāga! Oh, Gāga![1] Decide this matter (*hāga*). Bring him with dust on his head and his shoe in my . . . (and she mentions an expression for one of her members which it is not fitting to mention) and his turban in my girdle (*dikka*), hearing no speech but mine. (Then the Shaikha goes back to the completion of her original spell, and points with her hand to the sky, saying:)

Oh, whirlwind! Oh, clever one! You have satans with you!

Drag him and beat him, and carry him away to the home of this poor woman, and leave him there. Oh, Ṣābī! Oh, Ṣābī![2] Oh, Hearer and Answerer! Bring so and so, the son of so and so, improved and not enraged. If he enters, well and good, and if he goes off, well and good. Let my star and his star be with you in agreement!

(At this time, it is said, the "Helpers" [or Jinn] arrive, of various shapes and appearances, and hearken to the commands of the Shaikha and go off in a hurry after paying tokens of honour and respect.)

This is the regular form of the *Shabshaba*. And if the person

[1] [Gāga is the goddess of guidance.]
[2] [The name of a king of the Unbelieving Jinn.]

with her has a nervous illness, due to the Jinn, she recites the charm herself along with some modification in the forms of the commands that issue from her Ladyship the *Shaikha*, with a slight revision of their clauses.

[p. 7.] *The true Explanation.* When I wrote my chapters in Part One on Fraternizing with the Jinn (p. 32 ff) and on the *Nazīl* (p. 30 f), I wrote them in the true belief that the Jinn could not be enslaved. That was after I studied many terrifying books in the Khedivial Library in the Darb al-Gamāmīz (Cairo)[1] constituting almost a quarter of its contents. But I was not the only one who sought what was new, out of a natural love for study which is innate in mankind. For there reached me treatises printed recently in Europe in different languages, whose authors talked about a new subject which they named Spiritism, that is, Spiritualism, or the power of employing spirits. The authors all agreed in what they related of their experiences, or what reached their ears from trustworthy sources, that it is possible to employ the immaterial in the destiny of the material. They differed only at this juncture as to whether they are animal electric rays, or spirits (Jinn) bewitching by the power of incensing and special incantations. Our objection to the holders of the former belief is that they are unable to employ these rays to influence either a person whom the medium (" influencer ") has not seen, or the medium himself. It is as if someone asked the " enchanter " to influence someone whom neither of the two knew, but [p. 8] whose name alone they heard. In spite of this they mention in their treatises that it is possible to employ this spirit for any purpose whatsoever in the case of any person they wish, whether known to them, or unknown.

As for the case of a known person, we agree with their belief, since we have seen in the matter of Envy (see Part One, p. 78] what accounts for that.

As for the holders of the second belief, namely the employment of spirits (or Jinn) by a special way, would that I knew what to say to-day to the learned ones of the civilised world who, until ten years ago, used to lay it down that knowledge was preceded by reason and fortified by experience. But " in

[1] [Now called the Royal Library and located at Bāb al-Khalk. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

EF 278 757

After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*ḥiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

EF [832] [343]

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

F 164 757

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

72.

The Wakening of Love.

×539
●832

Yamma, ya rigli, la"ha-lli māši.
ʿēn el-ʿarūse lil-ʿarīs bitrāši.
Ya lēl ṭūl, ya fegr ma-ṭʿallāšī,
lamma yenām el-ḥill waiye ḥalīlo,
5 *u-fa"aš er-rummān ʿala-l-furāšī.*

O mother, my foot! He who passes, has touched it!
The eye of the virgin weeps for her bridegroom.
O, night linger on, O, dawn come not nigh,
When my beloved sleeps with his companion,
And breaks open the pomegranates upon the pillow.

1. The passer-by wishes to enter into relations with her.
5. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.

73.

The Day That I Saw Thee . . .

[114] The beginning of a song which Vollers took down from the lips of a blind sailor, at Assuân in 1890. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. LVIII, 228.)

Yōm šuftak ḥabbētak ḥāliṣ,
u-saʿet-lak bil-widd el-ḥāliṣ.

The day that I saw thee, I loved thee dearly.
And I have sought thee with sincere love.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Flatteries.

75.

×539
● 832

Ya naʿme, ya belīle,
Yammů šaʿūr, ya ṭawīle.

Thou tender one, so like belīle!
Thou, with the abundant hair, thou slender one!

[249?]

1. Belīle is a favorite dish prepared from corn, milk and honey. The sweetheart is compared with this delicate, sweet dish.

76.

Again, as in the preceding song, slender women are meant.

Ya naḫletēn el-ʿalāli,
ya balaḥkum dawa!

O ye two palms of the upper chamber,
Your dates are medicine!

Dalman has also these two lines, as a refrain to a love-song. In Dalman's song they run thus (p. 249):

Ya naḫlāt bi-l-ʿalāli	O ye palms of the upper chambers,
ya balaḥhum dawa	O their dates are medicine,
Ya nūr ʿl-ʿēn.	O light of the eyes!

Dalman heard the song on a steamer running between Bērût and Alexandria.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

79.

A Cool Reception.

539x
832

Ya ḥali 'al-bedawīye.
u-la'etni fid-darb eḍ-ḍaiya'.
wel-ḥatim fi-ṣbaḥḥa yezaiya'.
Hallet el-'azib mitnaiya',
5 *Min ginno ḥarra' eṭ-ṭa'iye.*

O, in what a state am I, because of the Beduin girl!
She met me in the narrow path,
And the ring on her finger sparkled. [301]
She left the lad standing, so that he flew into a rage. [152]
5 In wrath he threw his cap into the fire.

1. El-bedawīye (the Beduin girl) is a frequent subject of the songs of the peasant lads.

4. The sudden change from the first to the third person, is not a rare occurrence in such songs.

5. Respecting this cap compare No. 57. note on l. 4.

[P. 84 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

80.

Caution.

×539
● 832

Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazūl,
wirḫi dalāl šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

1. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

[83-]
[184]
[291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

81.

Wind and Love.

539x
832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The man is a watchman (ṛafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself. [192]

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7. [342]

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.] [114]

ʿAli ʿElēwe banā-lo fil-gibāl iḫṣāṣ,
biddo yeḥāš el-hawa.
Hūwa el-hawa yinḥāš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
5 *weš-šōk lam yindās,*
wil-bint lam tinḫiṭib,
illa-blammet nās.

ʿAli ʿElēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

83.

The Language of the Wise.

Aššaret bi-ʿēnêha, fihimt suallihe;
we-kull el-labîbin bil-ašāre yifhamu.

539*
832
[201]

She made signs with her eyes and I understood
her question;
All wise people understand by signs.

84.

Rose, Look Out!

A young peasant is at work in his field, near a house, in which lives a girl, to whom he would make advances.

Ya warde ṭilli
min ṛēṭ el-fellāḥ!
Ṭallet-li min fō'
bil-ḥala' weṭ-ṭō',
5 *lamma ṛamāni eš-šō'.*
Fi-ʿarḍik ṭilli.

O Rose look out
Upon the peasant's field!
Then she looked down from above,
With earrings and neck-ring (adorned), [301]
Till longing seized me.
"Have pity, look out!"

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

86.

A Mighty Helper.

539x
832
[778]

Compare the very similar little song from Cairo, in Lane II p. 81 (hence, of the year 1836)[1]. "He of Embābe" is Shēkh Isma'īn, whose tomb lies in Embābe, near Cairo. In Lane's song the appeal is made to Shēkh Aḥmed of Ṭanṭa (compare No. 8).

Ya-mbābi, yalla, ya-mbābi,
tigma'ni 'ala 'izz aḥbābi!
Win gāni ḥabībi-l-lēle,
la'mil-lo el-kašmīr ḍullēle,
5 *wa'ul-lo: salamāt, ya ḥabībi,*
'izz el-layāli el-lēle.

Thou of Embābe, up, thou of Embābe,
Unite me with my best beloved!
And if my beloved comes to me to night,
I will make for her a baldachin of the cashmere shawl,
5 And say to her: Welcome, my beloved,
This night is the fairest of nights!

4. The couch shall be decked with costly stuffs.

---

[1]) The preceding song in Lane (II p. 81) I also once heard sung, but unfortunately failed to write it down:

Everyone whose eyes are sleeping
Need not think the lover sleeps.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

85.

In Love.

*534

One day, à propos of this song, it occurred to a wag amongst our men, to improvise verses, and these improvisations were sung throughout that entire afternoon and, indeed, [186] to the Egyptian national hymn. This hymn is a very curious, [533] musical production, which, I am told, was composed after the oriental style, by a European.

Ṭāli'a min bēt abūha
rēḥe ḥōš eg-gimāl,
'ēnha-l-ḥabībha terā'i
wil-maḥrame fīdha-š-šimāl.

As she comes out of her father's house
And goes toward the camel-yard,
Her eye looks after her beloved,
And her handkerchief is in her left hand.

[233] 2. The place enclosed by a cactus-hedge or otherwise, in which the camels pasture. It lies outside the village proper.

4. The women are fond of coquetting with little em- [832] broidered handkerchiefs. Compare a song in Dalman, p. 25 [293] (from Jerusalem), which begins thus: "I see Mish'al sitting [531] by the mill, in Mish'al's hand an embroidered handkerchief."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

88.

Hope Deferred ....

539x
832

The lover awaits impatiently an opportunity to join his sweetheart. He compares himself with a ship, which, although ready to set out, is obliged to lie waiting at anchor. "I have waited for two years, and now I give up hope. Therefore let us depart!" — The song was usually combined with No. 131.

El-lēl, el-lēl, ya ḫilli!
Ya ma ṭāl el-lēl ʿala ḫilli!
El-ḫill ya mā-hu ʾāsi!
u-širibt el-kās, ya nāsī,
5 *sanatēn wana ʿal-barr rāsi.*
niḥḍir u-ngurr el-merāsi!

The night, the night, my loved one!
O, how long the night was for me because of my loved one!
O, how hard is the loved one!
I have drunk the cup (of sorrow) ye people,
5 For two years whilst I lay at anchor by the shore.
Now we are ready, let us weigh anchor!

4. The explanation: "cup of sorrow" is Maḥmûds.
5. Two years, an expression for a long time, is used also in No. 130, l. 3. [195]

[P.94 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Sick with Longing.

90.

539×
832●

Yā ma inte wāḥiśni,
ya gamīl, we-rūḥi fīk!
Ya meʿānis ʾalbi, le-mīn aškīk?
aškīk lilli ʾādir, ʾādir yihdīk
5 *we-yballiṛ eṣ-ṣābir amalo.*
Ana ḥāli le-buʿdak lam yirḍīk.

Oh, how lonely thou makest me,
Lovely one, while my spirit is with thee!
O companion of my heart, to whom shall I complain of thee?
I will complain of thee to the Mighty One, — [782]
mighty to guide thee
5 And make the patient one attain (the goal of) his hope.
It will not please thee (when thou seest) what is my state because of thine absence.

4. Of course God; compare No. 87, l. 2. He, alone, has power, so to guide the girl, that she may finally listen to her lover. [776]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

91.

×539 Those women are addressed, who torment a lover with
● 832 hard-heartedness.

'Atīl el-muḥabbe lē tuhgurû?
Mutaiyim u-muṛram, ma tirḥamû!
Ṭaḥantu fo'ado bi-siḥr il-'iyūn.
Kaffâ ma garā-lo, ta'ālu u-nzurû!

Why do ye forsake him, him slain of love?
A slave to love and filled with passion — have pity on him!
Ye have crushed his heart by the magic of your eyes.
That which has befallen him is enough. Come and look upon him!

The Charmer.

×539
● 832

93.

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
u-ʿala-l-ḥabāib u-ramāni.
libiset ʿuṣēbe wimradde,
witmaiyilet ʿal-muḥadde.
5 *sabbalit ʿiyūn el-muḥabbe,*
ma laḥeʾtiš alaggam ḥoṣāni.

[302] O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love (thee).
She wore a fillet and a gay-colored bodice,
And leaned upon the cushion.
5 She drooped her alluring eyes, —
Then I had no time to curb my steed.

1. We would say: Thy beautifully painted eyes have fettered me.

2. Compare with this strange construction in the Arabic, No. 5, l. 2.

[291] 3. The ʿuṣēbe is a little scarf, which is wound about the head like a fillet. The meradde is the gay-colored front of a vest-like garment.

5. She sends him an alluring, languishing glance from her half-closed eyes.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

94.

539×
832 ●

Ya bēḍa, koḥlik sabāni
'ala-l-ḥabaib u-ramāni.
El-bēḍa libiset dabūli
weš-šāṭeḥ wel-'o'd el-lūli.
5 *'ala mir-rāḥ u-gābû-li*
wašṭaḥ-bo nuṣṣ el-layāli.

O maiden white, thine eye-paint hath taken me prisoner
And cast me with those who love thee.
The white one wore silk,
And the shāṭeḥ and the necklace of pearls. [301]
5 Who will go and bring her to me? —
That I may recline with her at midnight!

1. Compare No. 93, l. 1.

4. Shāṭeḥ is a head-dress of gold or silver coins sewed in a row on the border of a piece of cloth, so that they lie on the forehead from temple to temple. (Almkvist, Kleine Beitraege p. 354.) Other kinds of head-dress however, are known by this name. (Lane II, p. 356.) [291]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

95.

×539
832

A Message of Love.

Il-leʾakum ḥabîbi,
sallamû-li ʿalê,
u-msikû-li ṭarfê šalo,
weʿzimû-li ʿalê.
5 *Win ma-rdîš bil-ʿozûme,*
Alla yehauwan ʿalê.

If my lover meets you,
Greet him me
And hold him by the corner of his shawl
And invite him to come to me.
5 But, if he cares not to accept the invitation,
May Allah forgive him for it!

6. For love of him I forgive him his refusal!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

107.

Persuasion.

The girl comes to her lover, named Abu Mūsa, who is busy at the sāqye (compare No. 97), to fetch him from his work. "Thou wilt find work at home to do, and there thou wilt be near me, and there will be time, too, for something else beside work." 539x 832

Yabu Mūsa, ḥill et-tōr!
Walla, māna ḥāllo,
lamma maiyil ḍillo.
Ḍillo maiyil u-rāḥ,
5 *wa-la ba'āš illa-l-mirwāḥ,*
ṣaffē banāni, ṣaff ilwāḥ,
ṣaff il-ḥōḥ 'ala-t-tiff'āḥ!
Ta'āle, ya ḥabībi, wišwešni;
aḥsan rāḥ teṛb we-tūḥašni.

"Abu Mūsa, untie the bull!"
"By Allah! I will not untie him
Until his shadow has grown long." [805]
"But his shadow has already grown long and gone away,
5 And there is nothing left to do but to go

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

539 And pile up the dove-jars and boards,
832 And pack the peaches and the apples!
Come, my beloved and caress me,
Else thou wilt stay out and leave me alone."

231 1. The bull which turns the sāqye. (Compare No. 97.)

6. The walls of the dove-houses are built of Nile mud
343 and earthen jars, so ranged on each other, that the openings
415 are toward the inside and the bottoms toward the outside. These jars furnish the holes for the nests. The bottoms of some of the jars are knocked out, in order to make entrance-holes. Boards and the ribs of palm-branches, form perches on the inside, while for the outside, branches of trees are usually stuck into the wall.

The illustration shows a half-demolished dove-house, the construction of which is thus made very clear.

These fortress-like dove-houses are to be found especially in Middle Egypt.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

108.

At the Garden-Door.

539x
832

The friend of a youth advises him as to how he may approach a certain rich and beautiful girl (l—6). The youth himself is also rich (ll. 9—10). The girl is from the maṛrib ("the west", that is to say, the coast-land of North Africa other than Egypt), where the women are noted for their beauty, as are the men for their sagacity. Ll. 7—13 contain narration by the girl. The song was a favorite of our workmen and often sung. [186]

ʿAla bab il-genēne
windah: Ya gamāl!
Tiṭlaʿ-lak ṣabīye
bēḍa maṛrabīye
5 *bir-raʾabe-ṭ-ṭarīye*
wil-lāli ṛarʾān.

Ḍarab el-bab bi-īdo,
sammaḥni ʾaṣīdo,
ʿašara min ʿabīdo
10 *tuḍrub bir-ruṭān.*
Daḫalna el-genēne,
beʿna wištarēne
we-ḥammalna eg-gimāl.

[p. 122 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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At the garden-door
Call: "O Beauty!"
Then a maiden will come out to thee,
A fair one, from the marrib,
5 With the soft neck,
On which the (heavy) pearls lie sunken.

He struck the door with his hand,
And let me hear his song.
Ten of his black slaves
10 Gabbled together.
We entered the garden,
Sold and bought
And loaded the camels.

12. 13 are an euphemism.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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2. In spinning, the thread is often moistened with the lip. 539x

3. To stand at the hearth in a peasant-hut, where the [286] only outlet for the smoke is the door — there is rarely a [354] window — certainly does not promote the beauty of the eyes.

5. It never struck me heretofore, that blond or red hair [826] was considered by the peasant to be especially beautiful; for instead of yellow, someone else said: laḥmar = "red".

6. The body is represented as a plate, on which lie the [826] breasts, the "pomegranates" (Maḥmûd).

Wild Nights.

539x
832

111.

Yasmar, ya lābis 'agātak,
Ya miššaḫla' min dān aḫwātak,
nuṣṣ el-lēl nisma' ḥarakātak,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām!

O brown one with the ivory bracelets,
Who art more graceful than all thy sisters,
Half the night we will listen to thy prattle,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep!

2. Iššaḫla' refers to the coquettish movements in dancing [535] and walking, which, according to our feeling, are not always refined. Compare 112, 1. The Arabic expressions for "graceful" and "prattle", here used, are not so innocent.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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112.

Gāi min beʿīd yitmaḫṭar,
wil-lūli ʿala ṣudro itbaḥtar.
Hāt el-mudām, ya ḫilli, u-nuskar,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām.

She comes, in the distance, with swaying gait.
And the pearls are scattered o'er her breast.
Bring forth the wine, my dearest, we will drink ourselves drunk,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep.

1. See Note on l. 2, No. 111.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

Invitations.

113.

The girl makes pretense of showing her lover one of the sand-banks which emerge from the Nile, suffer many changes and disappear, according to the season of the year. Here, of course, it is only a cloak (Maḥmûd). 539x 832 [133]

Yā tara, ya ḥabībi,
kuntē fēn el-yōm?
ša'rak mesabsab,
we-'ēnak sable lin-nōm.
5 *Iṭla' bina 'aṣr 'ali,*
ninām we-nišba' nōm.
wafarragak 'ala-l-gezīre,
illi-tnašet el-yōm.

Where, my beloved,
Hast thou been today?
Thy hair hangs on thy brow
And thine eye is heavy with sleep.
5 Let us mount a lofty house
And sleep till we are sated with sleep.
And I will show thee the island
Which has formed itself today.

3. Literally: hangs straight down.

5. 'aṣr, literally: castle, designates a solidly built structure with an upper story. Even a house such as the middle class in the cities possess, is, in the country beside the miserable peasant-huts, designated as 'aṣr, "castle" (Vollers). [342] [565]

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114.

Two people conversing. Ll. 1—2 are the words of the man; ll. 3—5 are spoken by the woman.

Yabu-l-libās el-ʾaṭīfe
we-dikketo halahalla!
Gibt en-nabāil, ya sīdi,
wed-da" laḥḍar ʿala īdi!
5 *Ya Moslimīn waḥḥadu Alla!*

"Thou with the velvet trowsers
The lacings of which are so fine!"
"I have put on the bracelets, sir,
And the green tatooing is on my hand!
5 Ye Moslems, testify to the oneness of Allah!"

4. Regarding the tatooing of the hands compare the remark on No. 64. l. 3.

5. The Egyptian sees nothing improper in combining pious expressions with most questionable matters.

115.

Taʿālâ-li, ya wād, taʿālâ-li,
taḥtē sagaret yūḥ, ya ṛazāli!

Come to me, my lad, O, come to me
Under the tree of delight, O my gazelle!

2. For "delight", the Arabic has a characteristic exclamation of pleasure (yûḥ!).

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Upper Egypt

119.

The Door and the Lover.

Ya bāb, 'ul-li 'ala auwil mesaḥibetak, 539x
ya bāb, 'albi inšabak mi' ḥubbê ṣāḥibetak, 832
ya bāb, ana kuntê gāi-lak ma' ṣiyāḥ ed-dīk, 342
ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak warmīk,
5 *ya bāb, ana kuntê nāwi aḫla'ak, sibtak.*
Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Ḥalli el-'a'l sākin fīk,
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣaḥbo gāfik?
Ma ultê: Ya bāb, gāk ḫafsê bi-muftāḥak,
'iyūn ḥabībi terāi min bēn ilwāḥak.
10 *Ma 'al-li-l-bāb: Wana mā-li ta'tibni,*
wiš yi'mil el-bāb, lamma ṣāḥibo zāḥak?
Ma 'ultê: Ya bāb, dana ḍaiyaḥtê 'alê māli,
u-lē ma 'ābilt el-ǵamīl badri u-hu-māli,
'ul-lo, ḫalli yūfi il-mi'ād!
15 *Illi 'alê si'ān ṣauwamni 'an akl ez-zād.*
'asamēn u-billāh, we-ṣōm el-'ām yilzamni,
in ma-ḥtaḍā-li-b-uaṣlo lasakkano il-alḥād!

"O door, tell me for thy former friendship's sake!
O door, my heart is entangled in love for thy mistress.
O door, I was on the way to thee before the cock crowed. [805] [825]
O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges and throw thee on the ground.
5 O door, I intended to lift thee from the hinges, but I have left thee."
What the door said to me: "Let reason dwell in thee!

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Upper Egypt

x539 What shall a door do, if its mistress treat thee
832 coldly?"
342 What I said: "O door, mayest thou sink, together with thy key,
The eyes of my beloved are looking between thy boards."
10 What the door said: "Wherefore dost thou reproach me?
What shall a door do, if its mistress does not want thee?"
What I said: "O door, it is I who have spent all my money for her;
And why have I not met the lovely one, when she went to draw water?
Tell her, to come to the meeting-place at the right time!
15 She, with the beautiful hips, is to blame that I hunger and eat no bread.
In truth and by Allah, and may a year of fast be laid on me,
If she does not grant me union with her, I will give her lodging in the grave!"

13. Compare the remark on No. 77.

15. In the original it is more realistic, namely: thigh. From love-sickness I do not think of eating.

122.

Capricious Love.

539x
932

Yabiaḍ, ya ḥilu-l-'awām,
yalli 'ala ṣudrak rummān,
kam aṣlaḥak winte ṛaḍbān!
Ṭalet 'alēna-l-layāli!

Thou white one with the sweet form,
Thou, on whose breast pomegranates lie,
How many, "Allah restore thee", it costs me when thou art angry!
The nights have been too long for us!

3. Aṣlaḥak Allâ (May Allah restore thee) is a much used, 82
ejaculatory prayer.
4. During which we have been far from each other.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

126.

Recognized.

×539 832 A girl wishes to ingratiate herself with a certain well-to-do young man (ll. 1—2). He repels her, saying that she bears the name of her other lover plainly upon her lips.

Massīk bil-ḫēr, ya-Mḥammed melā'ini,
rākib kuḥēle u-rāḥ el-kummê sittīnî.
Dā'i'a 'ala šiffetak ḥandar
u-'Osmān Bē! 'Iš' el-banāt ṛandara!
5 *Ya rabb, neggīni.*

"Good evening, Moḥammed, who meetest me
Riding a noble mare, and trailing the sleeve yards long."
"[O be gone!] Tatooed in green on thy lips is
The name Osman Bê! — — How fickle are girls when in love!
5 O Lord, save me [from all danger]!"

2. The last words mean literally: trailing the sleeve sixty (yards) long, a great exaggeration.

3. Literally: "Thou hast green color tatooed and the [304] name etc." Regarding tatooing see No. 64. Girls often have the name of a lover tatooed upon themselves. Compare a song from Endor in Galilee, in Dalman's collection, p. 112. "... the hands a work of the Creator and the blue tatooing over them strewn. On her breast she writes Ḥ and M and D." (These letters stand for Ḥ(a)m(a)d, the name of the lover.)

5. This exclamation has no connection with what precedes, [782] as it would seem from the English. It is one of the innumerable, ejaculatory prayers, which Moslems enjoy repeating.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnêye mis-sahar dablāne.
Sanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Hāṣimt ummi wabāye ʿala šāno.
5 *Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.*

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
5 Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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×539 5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
593 And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
464 So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabîye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'iye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzî') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The
● 832 inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without
[824] a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sānc.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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classified into believers and non-believers, on the basis of the Moslem faith, and they are hardly aware of concepts like race or class.

Silwa is to be considered basically as a folk community to the extent that human relations are not only of the personal, face to face type, but also familial. Social behaviour and mutual obligations are built upon the family relationship pattern, with regard to age, sex and status. Family relations are extended outwards to include the whole range of the community, and kinship bonds are the moral force behind village cohesion and group solidarity. Marriage, for instance, has its preferential bias towards cousins and relatives, and is an undertaking that implies the bringing together of two families.

Together with the emphasis on the family, one adds, to specify the degree of folkhood in Silwa community, such items of behaviour as the observation of patriarchal authority and respect relationship between the old and the young, and the reciprocal rights and duties between kinsfolk.

Moreover, sanctity and sacred sanctions lie at the foundation of a great deal of human activities and behaviour in the village; and ideally the sacred not only prevails over the profane, but sanctions and to some extent directs it. According to the villagers' view, 'life on this earth is like a farm, the harvest of which will be reaped in the next world'. Social acts and value judgment are grouped into two main religious categories: haram (forbidden) and halal (allowed), two words which have a distinctively religious flavour. Alongside the sanction of 'ar (social shaming) the notion of haram is another strong sanction for condemning a person who violates any of the prescriptions of the Koran or any moral or social norm.

To introduce acts of piety or holy symbols into everyday life is the best means of producing 'baraka', to mention God's name at the beginning of the meal, to thank Him at the end of it, to elicit His help on travelling, to count by saying 'God is one, second to none, three, the Caliphs are four'—as such religious ritual invokes holiness—'baraka'. To engage in Koran reading and reciting and to be able to quote the sacred language of the Koran, the Tradition and the sayings of the pious ancestors, is a sublime and ennobling occupation. It is not surprising that the villagers' spirit is always captivated by the story of the woman who, whenever asked about any matter, always gave an answer by quoting from the Koran.[1]

Cleanliness is envisaged mainly, not in terms of absence of dirt, but as the removal or absence of things that bring about religious impurity. To be in a state of valid ablutions is cleanliness, while the opposite is filthiness—'nagasa'. Attendance to such matters is more important than being clean or dirty in the secular, hygienic sense. Lustration as prescribed by the Koran, to wash one's private parts after evacuation, renders one clean and ready for saying one's prayers and is necessary for reading, reciting, or even touching the Koran. After sexual intercourse, husband and wife are enjoined to take a bath in a prescribed way, otherwise they are unclean.

[1] See Appendix V for the full text of the story.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 560 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust.

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

845 842 774

[789] [843] [761]

[833]

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three 843 821 761

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes certain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 887 883 183

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 183 83 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [839]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [832]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation. [841]

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183--analyst]

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men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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882 functions and the impact of this standardization on the basic personality structure and social institutions.[1] In the light of this statement, the social disciplines connected with sexuality are relevant data, and according to Kardiner, of great significance in understanding the basic personality structure and in explaining partly the nature of primary institutions.

It seems that in Silwa the process of socialization is similar in many points to that amongst the Tallensi and the Samoans, with regard to the continuity of the inculcated social norms and the spheres of adult and child activities.[2] Unlike many Western societies, youth in Silwa do not express in their attitudes that sense of being torn between youthful autonomy and parental insistence on dependence. This problem does not seem to be disturbing to parents and would seem abhorrent to youth who like to demonstrate their allegiance to their family and clan. Even if such desire for autonomy is occasionally expressed by boys, who on disagreement with their parents desert them for some relatives in another village or go to town to work, this is considered to be the exception, and of course such a desertion can never be entertained by girls. The lack of such strong desire could be explained by the security the youth derives from his status in his family and his need to be married by his parents.

Psychologically, however, adolescent boys, and more so adolescent [150] girls, impressed the writer as being on the whole timid, apprehensive and withdrawn. These traits stand out more clearly if compared with children's groups. Attitudes of initiative, self-assertion and drive seem to be the exception in adolescent behaviour.[3] In attempting to account for such general characteristics, the writer does not claim them to be the negative phase of the adolescent stage. He attributes their striking appearance to the cumulative effect of the severe social disciplines, and especially those connected with sex. The maturing of sex functions at this stage is noted [831] with great embarrassment, shame and feeling of guilt by adolescents. As mentioned before, complete hush and excessive secrecy prevails over sexual matters among adolescents as well as adults. This seems to contrast sharply with free bodily gratification given to the infants. There is no word for masturbation in the villagers' dialect. Sexual pleasure of any kind outside the marriage tie is condemned by the text of the Koran, as mentioned earlier.

[834] Manifestations of this excessive repression and fear of sex are obvious in the veiling of adolescent girls and women and the hiding of the breast

[1] Richard T. Sollinberger, 'The Concept of Adolescence', in *The Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 36, 1939, pp. 600–1. A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*.

[2] For adolescence and puberty as treated in different societies, see also Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Chapter II.

[3] This is the writer's general impression and could only be substantiated by comprehensive recording of the behaviour of adolescents. According to Fortes, however, 'for most problems of social anthropology, variations are of minor importance as compared with the "typical". For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance.' *Patterns of Culture*, p. 8.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

152 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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71.

Worldly Wise Advice.

539×
581
834

Yabu-l-bint el-baliṛ biḥha,
'ablê ṣalāḥ el-bint mēḍī'.
Yabūha, mā-t'ulšê 'alēha: di ḥurra;
lamma-tšūf eg-giḍ'ān barra,
5 *ti'mil zē el-mohra lamma-tšī'.*

O father of the marriageable daughter, sell her
Before the maiden's virtue is lost.
O thou, her father, say not of her: "She is an honorable girl".
When she sees the fellows outside,
5 She acts like an inflamed young mare.

1. "Sell", that is to say: "marry her off"; compare No. 57.
3. Thou canst not call her an honorable girl.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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80.

Caution.

x539
832

Ya munyati, gūdi
u-kīdi-l-ʿazāl,
wirḫi ḍalāl šaʿrik
yeṛaṭṭi-n-nehūd,
5 *widdīni bōse u-gūd!*
ʾal-li: ana ḫāif
tiṭmaʿ teʿaddi-l-ḥodūd!

O thou my desire, be generous
And outwit the watcher!
Loosen the veil of thy hair,
That it may cover thy breasts,
5 And give me a kiss and be generous!
Then she said to me: I fear,
Thou desirest to overstep the bounds!

2. The watcher, who prevents lovers from meeting, plays a large part in oriental love-songs. This is explained by the strict watch which is kept over the women and girls. In the country this vigilance is not as strict toward women who are not especially attractive, as it is in the city. The further one goes from Cairo, the less one sees of veiled women.

[834]
[184]
[291]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harim* (singular *harme; hàrem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[191] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[183] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion is made of her it is usually accompanied, as in the case of other unclean things, with a "saving your presence" (*esauk Allah*, literally "God honour you"); with regard to inheritance she is regarded as only a half person; she is generally excluded from the mosque, and as a rule is not required to pray, or to know more than is necessary for housekeeping. Still, in the lands of Islam, as well as in the rest of the world, the weaker sex has subjected the stronger in certain fields. Here, too, there are plenty of men who are under petticoat government. The wife is significantly called *sitt*, that is, "mistress," and even the husband calls her so. The wife has even duties to perform towards the outer world in so far as she has to manage the housekeeping. When, in the absence of her husband a guest has to be entertained, meals are served up in the name of the wife through her servants or children, she inquires after the name and health of the guest, but she herself does not appear.

Her sphere of activity is entirely limited to the house, and she fulfils her mission with all the more contentment that the pleasures of the great world are unknown to her. She is not unsusceptible to the attractions of dress and finery—her sex makes this a matter of course—but she has only her husband and her female friends to shine before, and that sets a natural limit to her desires. Her longings do not go beyond her state of half freedom, to which she is accustomed from her youth up, seclusion is not regarded by her as a restraint imposed by the tyrannical men, but as a precept of morality, and a sudden edict of emancipation would at once arouse in the harem itself as much indignation and resistance as a tightening of the reins among the ladies of civilization. It is not to be denied that only in the garden of freedom can a healthy plant thrive, and come to maturity and produce fruit a thousand fold. The greenhouse plant never feels the storm, but it remains weakly and droops at the slightest breath of unaccustomed air that gains entrance from the outside by some crevice. Yet experience teaches that a goodly number of those open-air garden plants cannot stand their freedom, and perish if they do not receive strict attention and care.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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abode. The corpse-washer goes to work with the utmost care; he washes the body up and down, repeatedly cleaning out all external openings, including the nose and ears, and stops them with cotton; cotton is placed even between the toes and fingers and under the armpits. After the body is dried with equal care it is enveloped in the linen cloth, which has meantime been sewed together, and in such a way that no part of the dead is now visible. It is then laid on a bier without a coffin (it is only the Christians that hastily put a coffin together), and a green or red pall is spread over it. After a benediction has been said over it in the mosque, it is carried to the graveyard. 764 [767] [184]

Hither the dead are borne at a rapid pace, those at least that were Mohammedans. With a haste and hurry that nothing can check the funeral procession rolls along, amid the murmur of *la ilah ill allah*, in order to carry the bier from the city of the living to the city of the dead. The advanced guard is formed by some blind and poor people and petty scribes, perhaps also some boys as a kind of choristers, and some flag-bearers. The bier is borne by four men, friends of the deceased, who are relieved by others of his friends, and thus the rapid march does not meet with the slightest interruption. A long procession of mourners and sympathizers follows, all in their ordinary working-day blouses, the relatives in the oldest and filthiest possible. Several portly well-to-do gentlemen pant behind, or have got themselves mounted upon trotting asses. By the side or at the end of the procession follows the wailing chorus of women, who on this day show remarkably little of their usual strictness in veiling themselves. [834]

Having reached its destination, the corpse, wrapped only in its white shroud, is taken from the bier and let down without a coffin into a perpendicular excavation. During this proceeding, if the corpse is that of a female her former street mantle is held spread out over her in order to keep off longing glances—under such circumstances little to be expected. It is not the perpendicular excavation, however, that receives the dead body, which, being protected by no

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

863 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" - the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [594] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relation-
[837] ship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands
[269] after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various
[56] chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa
[868] and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes cer-
[23] tain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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155 guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition
152 to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes [694] of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social [184] equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connec-
599 tion between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this [837] community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the [848] last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual [838] pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and [839] young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

880 Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems con-
885 nected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in
585 the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral
777 processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they
775 are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

764 Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either
769 side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

775 That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

837 Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of
684 the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on
682 her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

 PIT.

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The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

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THE FAMILY.

●837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen [848] virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery com- [684] mitted by a woman was punished with drowning down to a short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

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of an improvement on that of the female dancer. Clothed 535
and tricked out like a dancing-girl, he goes through the same 527
kind of motions on another evening to the delight of the spectators. Sometimes he also plays on some instrument, and sings as well; he blows his bagpipes full of wind, and [533] while it escapes melodiously from the holes of the tubes [534] under the play of his fingers he strikes up his ear-piercing song, which is followed by the hip-dance—a threefold artistic effect produced all at once. This class of hermaphrodites, [838] the product of the luxurious East, also resemble the dancing-girls in their abandoned morals.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENTS.

In this round of festivities entertainments of a religious 796
kind must not be absent, and they are commonly, on these [527]
and other occasions, the only ones that are held. They are not called *fantasies;* it is considered very far wrong in any one to call them so. The *chatmeh* or public reading of the whole Koran at one spell begins at vespers. From that until night, and from night-prayers to next morning, the whole of the Koran is gabbled over by school-masters, corpse-washers, and other similar functionaries who can read. The readers of the Koran speak and sing in the paternoster style, in a tone as if cajoling themselves and God, and breathlessly hurrying to the end; the words, nevertheless, have an imposing effect through the emphatic and melodious expression in which they are clothed, and the greater the more mystical they are. The guests, illumined by the blessing arising from the sound of the divine words, converse about all kinds of worldly matters. Indeed they do not generally understand the meaning of the words any more than the readers, and perhaps often the author himself. They do not wish to 779
understand, since the truth of the Koran is raised above all doubts, and to reflect on its meaning, and especially to criticise it, like the *feilosufi*, were worthy of hell fire. The Koran contains mingled together dreamy unintelligible passages, platitudes, repetitions, contradictions, unexpected digressions,

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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

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their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy. /181 /183

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow. [803]

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the climate might explain this. But what can explain the apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race? /181 /182

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries. [142 839]

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 882 883 183

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 [183] 831 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [834]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [882]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation. [841]

[For examples, see Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- analyst]

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

847 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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added to the other articles on the papers. These papers are now 755
rolled up with their contents, and each roll is tied round with spider's web. When an attack of fever comes on some olive oil is brought, and the patient must dip the first roll of paper in it. Then a fire is made in a pottery bowl, and the roll of paper is placed in it. As it burns the patient should let the fumes go up his or her clothes. If the patient is cured after this first burning of a roll he need not use the others. But if he has a return of the fever he must use the next roll, and so on, until he is cured.

All inscribed charms, so I was informed by the sheikh from whom I obtained the above information, should be written with a reed pen, a dry maize-stalk being generally used for this purpose. The reason he gave me for this rule is that the reed is made by the hand of God, while a metal pen is made by the hand of man.

The same sheikh wrote out for me a cure for a woman with "an issue of blood." A pure white plate must be brought, on the inner surface of which an inscription is written with black ink. Fresh water must then be put in the plate, and the patient must drink it. She will then be cured by the will of God Almighty. The ink with which the inscription is written comes off into the water, and the efficacy lies in the drinking of the inscribed sentences in this way.

A fortnight before I arrived at the sheikh's village he had cured a woman by this means. A literal translation of his prescription is as follows:

"A remedy which stops the flow of blood. Tried and true. 755
You shall write it in a white plate, and it is washed out with water, 841
and the woman shall drink it fasting before breakfast, and she shall be released from it[1] [*i.e.*, her illness] by the will of God most High. And this is what you write: 'Shalāsh, Shalāsh, Shinyūsh, Shinyūsh! Stop the blood for the sake of the Right [one of the names of God]. The blood shall be cut off from so and so, the daughter of so and so [mentioning the mother's name], for the sake of Damrurāg. Dry up, O blood, from the womb of so and so, the daughter of so and so [again mentioning the mother's name], as the sea dried up for Moses, and as Mary bore Jesus.'"[2]

Shalāsh and Shinyūsh are, so I was told, names of God in 776
Syrian. Possibly they are very old words, and, on that account, 755

[1] Or cured.
[2] Evidently referring to a belief connected with the manner of the birth of Christ, which is, I understand, current among Muslims.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

returned shortly with a piece of the material demanded, on which the sheikh wrote some magic words. After doing this he told the anxious relatives that the man was possessed by an *'afrīt*, and thereupon, according to his promise, accompanied them to the madman's house.

Here he found the patient lying on the ground covered with a blanket, with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound together at the ankles with strong cords. The sheikh then started to burn incense in a dish and to read some of the incantations from one of his books. Whereupon the madman tore asunder the cords which bound him, and began to strike out right and left. When the sheikh asked him why he behaved in this way the *'afrīt*, speaking through the madman, replied, "You have an unclean woman in the room."[1] On hearing this the sheikh was very angry, for no unclean woman must ever be present on such an occasion. So he ordered all the people, and there were many present, to leave the room, with the exception of a few of the man's male relatives. Crowds always collect on the slightest excuse in all Egyptian villages, offering conflicting advice at the top of their voices. On such an occasion as this of the sheikh's visit to the madman the room where the patient lay would have been packed with sympathizers and eager sightseers.

When the crowd had been banished from the room the madman became quiet, and the sheikh continued to burn incense and to recite magic sentences. The sheikh finally told the *'afrīt* to leave the man, but he replied (of course speaking through the man), "From what part of his body shall I leave him? May I come out through one of his eyes, which will then become blind, as a punishment for his breaking the head of one of my children?" The sheikh replied that he would not permit him to do this, but that he was to come out of the big toe of one foot. The sheikh then placed a *ḳulleh* on the ground, and said to the *'afrīt*, "I shall know that you have left the man if you knock over this *ḳulleh*."

Presently, as he continued reading his incantations, the sheikh saw a few drops of blood fly from the man's big toe toward the *ḳulleh*, which was immediately flung with a crash against the wall. The madman then sat up and said, "Where am I? And who are you?" After a while he recognized all his relatives, whom he had not known during the whole period of his madness. They

[1] A menstruous woman is always regarded as unclean.

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785 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the
796 doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing,
783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are
785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men-
796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their
[562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and
[841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic
796 on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the
[202] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets
796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun-
264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" dur-
[574] ing Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street.
[735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events 843
in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and [842]
symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles
in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this [115]
chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant
divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. [753]
If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or [826]
abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and [262]
they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a [626]
common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbours can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and [788] filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle over her body on her return.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home.

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'.

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying),

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects.

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that
still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she 846
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have
elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded
throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [976]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told [877]
him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father
has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [783]
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846,
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 431
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or
distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the
child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money
and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal
grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat
before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child,
accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some
elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new
scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding
his mother's or father's old wrappings. 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 847
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of
the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their [58]
father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant,
Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the
"Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by
their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in
this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace
and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

842 My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[730] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls. 842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many 844 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and 843 advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child 431 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immedi- 602 ately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and 846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure 431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or 602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was [578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged 602 with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him- 844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MK13
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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive *behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded* as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [778] [849] [847]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compeling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

862 The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between 842 lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant,

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [848] [577]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the *infant to social discipline as early as* possible.[2] 862 [828]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father, as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of gossip and warning against such mixture. 582

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth. 853

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting. 856

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food. 862

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circumcision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive. [821] [842] [304] [821]

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its 854

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
852 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
865 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[152] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's
[164] death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies,
[152] and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

852 During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
154 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[754] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardised system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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fact that the mother, in taking the child to the Nile, throws his foreskin, enclosed in a loaf of bread, into the water, and washes the 'mirwad' (antimony stick) used in the operation in the waters of the Nile. This relationship is also evidenced by the fact that circumcision, like weaning, should take place at least two or three days before the appearance of the new moon, otherwise the child is liable to be 'tied up' (mushahir), the consequence of which may be that the wound might not heal quickly, or that the child might eventually be sterile.

Children show great interest in the circumcision ceremony, as it is a great occasion in which they associate with the circumcised child, eat with him, enjoy themselves, inviting people for the ceremony, or going on the children's round with their palm-tree branches, or getting sweets and peanuts during the procession. They usually tell you of the good food they had or the new clothes they wore on the occasion of their younger sibling's or cousin's circumcision. On asking some of the schoolchildren about events during which they felt happy, they invariably gave the answer of a sibling's circumcision or marriage. The educative significance of the ceremony for the older children, who witness and attend this public celebration, though indirect, is quite obvious. The social norms based on mutual obligations, the meaning of kinship and family solidarity, are concomitant in the ritual ceremony.

One cannot discuss circumcision without reference to the psychoanalytical explanation of the ritual. Freud sees in it the castration complex, which is derived from the Oedipus situation. He states that in some primitive societies circumcision is common and is performed at the age of initiation into manhood, and it was only as a secondary development that it was transferred to the early years of life. He continues: 'It is of great interest to find that among primitive peoples, circumcision is combined with cutting the hair, and knocking out of teeth, or is replaced by them, and that our children, who cannot possibly have any knowledge of this, in fact, treat these two operations, in the anxiety with which they react to them, as equivalents of castration.'[1] In Silwa such an anxiety concerning castration is evident in the adults' threatening their children to recircumcise them even if they are already circumcised, and it manifested itself in one of the children's dreams described later.[2]

Some psycho-analysts maintain that circumcision, as an initiating ceremony of the child by his elders, helps to conduct the growing children across those difficult thresholds of life transformations that demand change in the patterns, not only of conscious, but also of unconscious life.[3] Géza Roheim maintains that circumcision represents a process of the child's growth from the passive Oedipus situation to the active orientation towards the loved object. 'The period of life which conditions the transition from

[1] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, footnote, p. 139. [2] See Appendix XI.
[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series, New York, 1949, p. 10.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

CHILDREN occupy a very important place in Egyptian society, as will be seen in Chapter VI, which is concerned with the numerous methods employed by women to ensure their producing offspring. 842

When a woman becomes pregnant she often hangs up in various rooms in her house pictures of legendary persons who are renowned not only for physical beauty, but also for their loving and gentle disposition. The expectant mother believes that if she constantly looks at such pictures the child to be born will resemble them in face and character. Anything and everything that she gazes at for any length of time is believed by her to affect her unborn child.[1] The first year that I visited Egypt I was on more than one occasion somewhat embarrassed by the numbers of women who would sit or stand around me when I happened to be visiting a village, staring at me without moving their eyes from my face. I was afterward told by my servant, who always accompanied me and assisted me greatly in my work, that these women were all expectant mothers and desired to have babies resembling me in face—hence the rigid stares! Since then I have frequently been gazed at in this manner, but have now quite lost my first feelings of embarrassment. 843 789

"Ah," said one woman when thus engaged in studying my features, "if I had a girl like her I could marry her for a thousand pounds!"

"Look well, O girl," replied my servant, "and if you are in a state of yearning you may have one like her!"

For a similar reason most women in this condition will endeavour to avoid ugly or unpleasant sights or people, fearing that their unborn infants may be thereby adversely affected. If a pregnant woman should see a dead person, man, woman, or child of either sex, and not take the necessary precautions, it is the generally 843

[1] This is also a common belief in England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

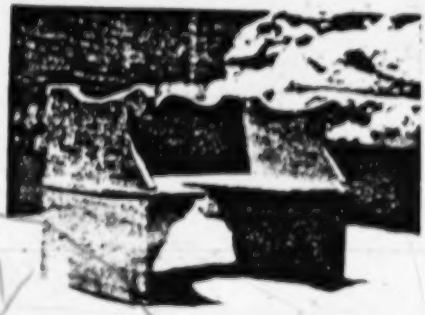

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

845 842 779

[789 843 761]

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three 843 821 761

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real

terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 842 F [178] F [761] F C 852 304

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *henna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

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On my first visit to Egypt in 1920, soon after my arrival at my brother's camp on the high-desert slope in Asyūṭ Province, a certain number of childless women sent appealing messages to me, asking if I would let them have one of the bones which were scattered in great numbers about the ancient burial site on which the camp was situated. Their object was to step or jump over the bone in order to ensure, as they believed, the production of offspring. I acceded to their request, and then suddenly thought of my pendants, which I had unfortunately forgotten to bring out to Egypt with me. However, I sent a message to the women to say that I had written to England requesting that certain very potent charms that I possessed should be sent to me as soon as possible.

[532]

FIG. 44. THE FOUR CHARMS OVER WHICH THE WOMEN STEP

When the parcel arrived I caused the fact to be known in the various villages of the district, at the same time intimating that I should be glad to see any of the women who wished to make use of them. From then onward women, sometimes as many as ten at a time, would come from various villages in the district, crossing the lower desert, and climbing up to our camp on the hills which rose into the upper desert. They were usually accompanied by a middle-aged man or woman, sometimes by both. The man was not present at the ceremony, but the woman chaperon stayed with them all the time.

The ritual was as follows. The women first repaired to one of the ancient decorated tomb-chapels, conducted thither by one of our servants, who had the key. On entering they each stepped seven times backward and forward over what they supposed to be the mouth of the shaft admitting to the subterranean burial chamber. When this performance was over they returned to the undecorated tomb-chapel in which I lived. Here I produced the charms, two of which were placed on the ground at a time. Then each woman

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. 789
Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a 842
mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women 842
will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing 778
that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women 789
sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this 775
belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's 842
tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to 782
make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain 782

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or at-
778 tached to, living people. Over and over again women have come
123 up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly
764 bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the
842 mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the
775 woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FERTILITY RITES

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a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward seven times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation.

B 842 775 171

A very similar practice has been noticed among the Bangalas, a tribe to the north of the Congo. On one occasion a woman of this tribe was seen to be digging a hole in a public road. Her husband explained to a Belgian officer who was present that his wife wished to become a mother, and begged that she might be left unmolested, promising, on his part, to mend the road afterward. The woman continued to dig till she had unearthed the skeleton of her dead child, which she affectionately embraced, begging it at the same time to enter her body to be reborn.[1] In this case we see a very similar rite, accompanied by the same belief, as in modern Egypt.

E 842 766

Among the Copts, if a child dies while it is a baby and after it has been baptized the body is enclosed in a coffin. However, the mother of the child instructs the men who take it to be buried in the graveyard (generally near a monastery) that they are to remove the body from the coffin and inter the latter only in the vault. The body of the child is then buried in the sand near the vault, and sand is placed under its armpits and its chin and on its thighs. This, the mother believes, will ensure her having another child. It seems as if the Copts have a belief similar to that of the Muslims mentioned above, and that the sand is used to keep the body from twisting and thereby preventing the mother from bearing another child.

Again, among the Copts, if a child dies before it is baptized it is placed naked in a *ḳādūs* (an earthenware jar, several of which are attached to water-wheels). This jar is buried under the floor of one of the rooms in the house, it does not matter which, and is covered again with the mud of which the floors are usually made in the houses of the *felláḥīn*. This is believed to ensure the mother having another child.

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her

[1] Quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, "Adonis, Attis, and Osiris," 3rd edition, vol. i, p. 92.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order
152 that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman
[827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291] [192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] [714] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *karīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *karīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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C 842 789 been sitting and proceeded to lift the jar from off the woman's stomach. It took a very strong and somewhat lengthy pull to do this, and as it was finally removed there was a resounding pop, like an explosion. It was explained to me that one possible reason C [827] for the woman not having conceived was that she had "wind in her stomach." The noise caused by the removal of the jar was this wind coming away, as they supposed, from the stomach through the navel. The performance was repeated two or three times, and on each occasion when the jar was pulled away the noise was very loud, and the two attendant women remarked on how much wind the patient had in her stomach. As I have said, the woman who removed the jar had to exercise her full strength to get it away, and this part of the performance must have caused the patient a good deal of discomfort, if not actual pain, for her stomach was dragged up with the jar in the effort to remove it, the suction, of course, being caused by the vacuum created by placing the jar over the lighted 'candle.' I was sorry to hear, when making inquiries later on, that the operation had failed to produce the desired effect!

F [291]

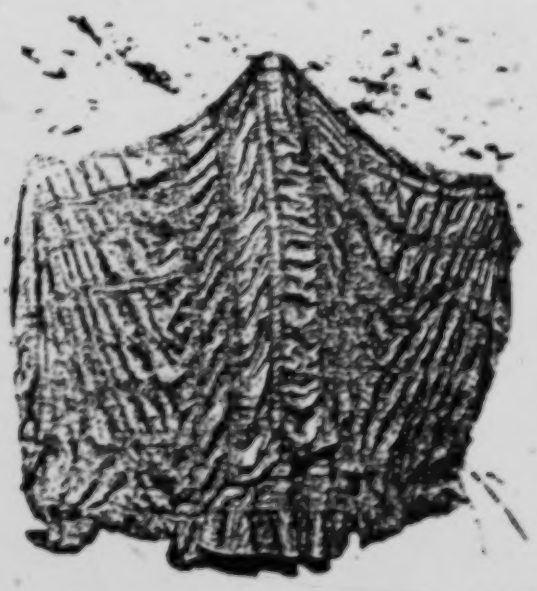

FIG. 47. WOMAN WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN A TŌB

F 842 789 Childless women frequently have recourse to this fertility rite, at any rate in some parts of Egypt. I do not yet know if it is a widely

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spread custom, for, being a somewhat private operation, it would not be talked about freely, and one must have been on very familiar terms with the people for a long time before being invited to be present on such an occasion. 842 789

Quite recently I was present at another rite performed by two childless women. A third woman held a long, wide piece of black material over her head and outstretched arms, so that she was completely covered (Fig. 47). This garment is called a *tōb*, and is the one worn by women out of doors. The woman who thus officiates must be one who has had children that have died. One of the childless women then crept underneath the *tōb* and walked round the officiant seven times, always keeping well under the garment (Fig. 48). The second woman then followed suit. No woman who has walked round another woman in this way must in her turn thus hold the *tōb* for another, for if she did the benefit she had hoped to secure by walking under this garment would be taken from her. 842 789 291

FIG. 48. WOMEN CREEPING UNDER THE TŌB

These two women, hearing that I was coming to the village in which the ceremony was to take place, delayed carrying it out until I could be present, in the hope of getting the additional benefit of 842 789 123

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my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

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I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 789 [841] If a woman when she gives birth to a child does not want to conceive again for some time she takes some date stones and covers them with some of the blood of her confinement, and then, tying them up in a rag, conceals them in a wall of her house between the bricks. The chink is then stopped up with clay. Each date stone she thus conceals represents a year, and the number, of course, varies according to the number of years she wishes to remain without offspring. When she wishes to have a child again she removes the date stones from their hiding-place, steps over them seven times, and then, placing them in water, bathes in it. I had the opportunity of witnessing such a performance once. The woman, to enable me to take a photograph in a better light, placed the date stones on the threshold of her house, and then stepped over them. Some of these date stones, with the rag in which they had been tied up, were afterward given to me.

847 754 789 [791] A man who is well known to me divorced one of his two wives a year or so ago, and this woman resolved to have her revenge on the other wife. She accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She consulted a female magician, who wrote a spell on an egg and another on a palm-leaf. A male member of the divorced woman's family (probably her brother) took the egg and the leaf and hid them in a tomb. The hiding-place is kept secret, so that no one can remove them, for if they were discovered and taken away they would no longer remain effective. It has come to the knowledge of the man's wife that the divorced woman has acted in this way, and the spells, so she says, have made it impossible for her to bear a child. Possibly the firm belief she has in the potency [758] of such spells has brought her into a neuropathic condition.

842 164 163 515 The fact that so many methods of curing barrenness are employed by the peasants is an indication that, despite the high birth-rate, infertility in women is not uncommon in Egypt. As has been pointed out to me by a doctor who is in daily touch with the poor, venereal disease, which is, unfortunately, very prevalent in some villages, is largely responsible for this state of affairs. A proper organization, involving treatment and instruction in simple hygiene—at present, so far as I know, entirely lacking in the country places—is badly needed to prevent the further spread of this terrible scourge.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*." F 755 776

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible. 791 776

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived. E 392 469 E 842 755

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him. E 782 756 [152]

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman. E 782 776 755

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many E 513 776

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, "I am very angry."

His father said, "Why are you angry, my son?"

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

MUSLIM SHEIKHS

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a 792
man in another village in the same province. She then told him 787
the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to 685
the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented 792
the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and 787
the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked 766
to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle 792
Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which 766
was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end
of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede 787
for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who 755
wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The
nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of [326]
native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be 842
cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated,
and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year. [769]

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to
them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed 792
miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their 787
local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some 775
standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than 577
mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign [hieroglyph] (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fiḳīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.
[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.
[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.
[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

754 with the pre-Islamic and pre-Christian magic of Ancient Egypt.(41)

This affinity is confirmed by the faith of the fellaheen in everything that represents itself to be ancient, primitive, *qadîm*. For many of their superstitious beliefs they can give no other reason. Why is a Coptic monk preferred as a 792 sorcerer? Why should the touching of ancient statues 842 make a woman conceive? Why should a pebble or written 777 charm from the sorcerer give effect to a wish? Because it is *qadîm*. Because it holds in itself the power of the past.

764 The function of women mourners is also traditional. A [765] fellah dies. At once loud cries from the womenfolk announce it to all the neighbourhood. The common bier is fetched from its place near the *gurn* outside the village. Women wash the body in warm water within the house, while outside rise the wailings of the mourning women.

In their funeral cries they boast of the beauty and fine qualities of the departed, they reproach God for taking him, they call to the dead man, to his wife and children, they cry out to Death itself. These complaints seem natural and improvised. In fact they are no more so than the tears of 767 the professional mourners, wrapped in great veils (*milayas*) 535 specially for this ceremony, their face coloured black or blue as a sign of mourning, their heads sprinkled with mud. Leading the womenfolk in a ghastly dance, they rise, clap their hands, sway about and fall exhausted, now slackening, now hurrying their cries. Here the women take first place. The men put in an appearance, both at the funeral and on the visit of sympathy, for death is a part of public life. But they participate only by their presence; they say nothing. In silence they follow the bier, clasp the hand of the nearest relation, stay seated for some time by the dead man's house, and make their way home again(42a).

530 Other occasions, less frequent but more joyful, bring the 538 fellaheen together for music and story-telling. The man who brings them these hours of pleasure is the *sha'ir*, reciter, storyteller and singer all in one. He is himself a fellah, but an exceptionally gifted one. It is his melodious voice that has singled him out for the musician's life, but he also ac- [534] companies himself on the *rebâba*, a single-stringed, sharp-toned violin. He will sing the praises of Mohammed or Jesus, describing the Prophet's appearance in naive, highly-

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 783 [852] Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket, which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days. The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abriq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 [431] If at the moment of birth the father is working in the fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 751 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus 853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured 842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa, 586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 482 When the time comes for her to go out — and this happens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries 853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 857 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying follah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

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Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 ● 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

branches in use to adorn the bride's canopy and the tombs 245
of the dead.

The day after his wedding the bridegroom strips a palm
branch, splits it at the point and goes to touch his friends [585
with it for good luck. To strike a man with a green palm 777]
branch brings blessing. Palms to the fellah are like flowers,
and there can be no procession or wedding or funeral without
them.

The pollen of a male date-palm mixed with water is a 777
charm against childlessness. On the other hand, to swallow 842
one, two, or three date-stones will prevent childbearing for
as many years.

Magic and medicine are confused in the traditional use 755
of the products of the earth to preserve or recover health. 757
The startling pharmacopœia of the fellaheen is to be put down 278
partly to experience but chiefly to superstition. They have
taken whatever came to hand and used it : for the bowels
an infusion of palm or maize leaves ; for the eyes onion juice
or charred cotton ; for broken bones acacia gum ; for swell-
ings or rheumatism bandages of hemp. The treatment
clearly depends on what plants they have within reach,
and the effect, in great part, on credulity.

Those peasant traditions, unquestioned and irresistible, 183
are largely superstitious. Miss Blackman gives the greater 171
part of her book (**) to describing superstition in its thousand 178
forms, as if the whole life of the fellaheen were passed in these
sub-rational affairs. Too much weight, probably is laid
on fellah superstitions. They areree orded with a certain
condescension, and in spite of all that has been published on
the subject there are still many gaps. However, there is no
point in enriching the collection, since there is nothing ori-
ginal in it. Most of these customs are common to the whole
of the East or to Islam. The rest, which go back beyond
Christianity to ancient Egypt, are one more illustration of
the changelessness which was the subject of our first chapter.

It is certain that these benumbing practices of the fella-
heen are even more effective than their manner of life in
isolating them and bringing about that withdrawal which
'man creates for himself by the whole structure which he
founds on his own labour'. To a way of living which itself
weighs him to the ground the fellah adds the burden of these
ritual observances.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

THE MUSHĀHARA

THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākhīṭ*. (*Masākhīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākhīṭ* (singular, *maskhūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the abovementioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

And as for the manner of releasing the "Tied", it is as
755 follows: One of the quacks, whom we have mentioned,
787 measures the *Atr* [see f.n. above, p. 40] of the one who is "*tied*" by the ropes of illusion, and shackled with the chains of worthless beliefs, and says to him, "There is something written against you on a piece of bread which has been eaten by a fish in the sea, and it is not possible to release you from your trouble unless by obtaining this fish." Then he describes to him the appearance of this fish from his own imagination, and asks him for a fine sum for bringing it to him in a few days. When the time comes he brings a fish in his hand in whose mouth he has placed the piece of bread with the letters written thereon, and delivers it to the patient who, when he has opened its mouth and seen what it contains, thereby helping to confirm the statement of the "prescriber," he begins to be cured little by little because of his belief that he would be cured of his illness when he attained [p. 42] his prize, namely, the above-mentioned fish. But there is no doubt that the whole thing is a trick. As for the "prescriber" or "spiritual sage" he has already obtained his fee.

842/818 Sometimes it happens that the wife of an elderly person dies, after he has exceeded the bounds in procreation for some time, and he marries another wife, only to find that he has no longer the power of procreation, so he repairs to the swindlers who either take the opportunity to cheat him, or "prescribe" for him certain tonics such as ambergris, and other pungent substances such as black pepper (*fulful Sūdānī*), and a powder made from the penis of the crocodile [p. 43] and so on. But all these are of no avail unless to diminish his wealth, and his reason, and his health (if he had any). He is not aware that the time of his youth has passed.

[539] "How far away is the time of youth to one turning back;
Yes, and there is no fear of old age to one going forth."

For Time has assailed him with its burden, and it was most essential for him to spend the rest of his life at ease, protecting his health from the influence of diseases, caused by his previous
931 incontinent behaviour. For there is no more injurious thing for the body, nor one more destructive of life, than sexual indul-

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīt*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Some women who are barren carry a strigue of wool dipped in powder of Egyptian natron, and this "prescription" is in fact, said to be advantageous, when the barrenness is due to the acidity of the fluids secreted by the woman's reproductive organs, for it counteracts its effect, without preventing the male fertile germs, as formerly was the case, from reaching the female generative germ.

XX

THE MUTA'AWWAḲA

This is the woman who gives birth, but whose children die. The best known "cure" is an "operation" which is performed every year, called "the Cutting of the Follower" *ḳaṭ' al-tabī'a*), which is practised by certain special "Old Wives." The manner of it is that the "old wife" comes to the husband and his spouse and makes them stand in front of one another. Then she takes a fowl which is jet black, without the least blemish in it, kills it, extracts its entrails, and plucks its feathers, and cuts a thread which she has previously joined between the thumbs of the husband and his wife. Then she collects all these things for the safety of the woman, and buries them all under the threshold of her room. Thereupon she departs after receiving a weighty reward in compensation for the fowl. By such acts the women believe that the child will live, as if these had [p. 46] a secret influence on its life. It is customary to repeat this experiment at each birth if success follows it the first time. The payment also is increased two, or three, or four fold, and so on, with each successive year, the mother believing that if she does not do so, the "operation" will not succeed in future.

They explain all this by saying that the husband has a mate (*ḳarīna*),[1] one of the Jinn, who is seized with jealousy

[1] [This is a very widespread belief. In most cases, it appears, the "mate" is of the opposite sex. That is, a man is possessed by a *ḳarīna* (fem.); a woman, by a *ḳarīn* (masc.). But there are exceptions noted. Miss Blackman (p. 69 ff.) does not note the sexual difference. Dr. Zwemer, in his work, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, devotes a complete chapter (VI) to the subject of the *Ḳarīna* or familiar spirit. See below the section entitled "The *Ḳarīna*" p. 46). Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

and envy of the man's wife because she has children. So, to appease this jealousy and love, the *ḳarīna* kills them. To prevent the *ḳarīna* from doing this it is necessary to have this "operation," which certain of the "old wives" undertake as a means of obtaining money from the simple and silly ones, both men and women.

XXI

KILLING OF CHILDREN BY THE INDIGO SPELL

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Nīla*)[8]

THE women believe that if a woman wearing a dress dyed with *nīla*, i.e. with indigo, enters the presence of a childing mother, the latter will have no more children. They assert that the only "cure" for this is for the mother to visit an indigo dye-house and then she will be all right.

XXII

SPELL CAST BY THE EGG-PLANT

(*Mushāhara bi'l-Bāḏhingān*)

INABILITY to have more children sometimes results from a spell cast by the black egg-plant (*bāḏhingān*) (or *bidingān*) [or Mad-apple, *Solanum melongena*]. The woman who would be "cured" of that has only to visit a field of egg-plants. (Those engaged in the service of the Gardens in Cairo, as in other cities [p. 47] and towns, set aside a part of the enclosure for the growing of the black egg-plant, because they make a lot of money from the visitation of these women to them.)

[8] [Indigo (*nīla*) is regarded as ill-omened in Egypt. It is seen at funerals on the faces and hands of the mourning women. There is a well-known curse in the vernacular, *Gātlak an-nīla* (*al-ba'īd*) = May indigo come to you (present company excepted!) Tr.]

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
757 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARÎNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

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XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABDŪL)

906 855 695 783 SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say, "God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own*."

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

• 842 751 IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Tarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afârît*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *karîn*. "Oh," replied the *'afârît*, "he is dead also, and your *karînah* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afârît* spoke through her. 776 173 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *afrît*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellâhîn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [848] [754]

A woman's *karînah* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *karîn* or *karînah* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *karînah*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *karînah*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *karînah* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *karînah*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *karînah* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*hijâb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *karînahs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *karînah* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *hijâb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirîbeh* made of *bûs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirîbeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karīnch* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] 825 [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karīnch* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karīnch* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karīnch* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karīnch*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karīnch*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karīnch* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773]

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 10 ff.

[See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

even among the patterns of Godfearingness in all times and 595
all countries. Though a man has several wives, that is not
a proof of his unbridled sensuality. A man often takes an
additional wife because his first one has not presented him [842]
with the heirs he longs for—sons in particular—as was the case
with the Prophet himself; or matrimonial relationships have
become impossible through illness, old age or incompatibility.
And it always testifies to some tenderness of feeling when 586
the husband will not put away his first wife or the mother
of his children. This step, easy as the law makes it, is resorted
to only in exceptional cases, especially if the children are
still alive. The great ease with which divorce may be
effected is a much weaker side of Mohammedanism, and
there are of course a considerable number of dissolute fellows
who take advantage of this and do not fill their houses with
expensive, scolding, legitimate wives (the number of whom
cannot exceed four), but indulge their passions by a change
of wares, be they free or slaves. Some men get as far as a
fifth wife without ever having had more than one at a time.
This does not lower a man in the estimation of the people, if [554]
he does not do anything not permitted by religion, though
it will be easily understood that such a person is often unsuc-
cessful in his wooings. Any one may keep as many female 567
slaves as he pleases; if one of them has presented him
with children, however, the excellent custom that prevails
demands that he shall not sell her, still less her children, who
according to the law are in all respects legitimate. The 586
father must always maintain the children that any divorced
wife has had to him. The question of expense, therefore,
forms a beneficial check upon licentiousness, and from this
and other reasons it is very common among the higher
classes, and among the middle and lower classes almost the [595]
rule, for a man to live his whole life long with only a single
wife. Unfortunately no statistics are to be had relating to
these matters, since the state does not concern itself about
matrimonial affairs; these are attended to by the ecclesias-
tical judge or kadi.

In divorce cases this functionary, after some weak attempts

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[831] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
988 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional
165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[582] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Four

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

PREGNANCY and giving birth are perhaps the most important events in a married woman's life, and therefore the characteristics and symptoms of pregnancy are easily recognized in the female circles in the village. Unless otherwise stated most of the information given in this chapter has been supplied by a female relative of the writer. The informant divided the period of pregnancy into three main stages:

The first is the month of secrecy (al shahr al sirry) when, at the stopping of menstruation, the woman realizes that she is going to conceive. The news should be kept a secret from all except the closest family circle. If any neighbours or visitors should enquire about it, it should be positively denied. This atmosphere of secrecy should be kept up as long as possible for fear of the evil eye. It is believed that at this early stage the embryo is more susceptible to the influences of the evil eye than at any other stage.

In the second month, the woman may declare, still with reluctance, that she is heavy, or carrying (thagila or hamil). During this month it is said she is prone to feel dizzy (daikha), and is much inclined to stretch and sleep readily. It is believed that during this period also God starts shaping the prospective baby; consequently a pregnant woman should not be awakened by anybody if she is asleep, lest such disturbance hamper or interfere with the process of creation. Children's congenital defects or abnormalities, e.g. six fingers, split lip, bulging forehead, are attributed to the fact that the mother's sleep was disturbed during this period.

The third important stage is that of craving (waham) which is experienced by the woman during the third and fourth months. During this stage the pregnant woman is allowed free and wider choice in her food. She is demanding articles of food which she 'craves for' continually, and they are usually items that are rare or at least not within everyday access, e.g. melons, fruit, savouries and the like. Eating is supposed to stand her in good stead during the ordeal of pregnancy and birth.

The husband must do his best to provide his wife with what she craves for, otherwise he would be socially disparaged by his wife's family. It is a common theme in village gossip to refer to a woman who is always strain-

[p. 86 is blank]

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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843 [626] ing her husband's finances, especially in her demand for food rarities, as 'a woman permanently in the craving period'. The pregnant woman's desires also provide a testing ground for neighbourliness and reciprocity when she sends one of her family to 'borrow' something for her. Neighbours are expected to meet such requirements if they have been approached, while at the same time they are usually requested not to spread the news. This could also be regarded as an occasion to announce the expected baby to the neighbours, who might be asked to help at a later stage.

[593] In the 'craving period' the wife asserts her desires over her husband, and with it goes an assertion of the matrilineal side over the patrilineal authority. The gifts and attention centred around the pregnant woman by the husband and his people indicate some cultural balance and provide a psychological outlet to the normal husband-wife pattern of relationship. The ideology of a patriarchal community has to concede a certain amount of tolerance for the satisfaction of its fervent sentiment towards the offspring.

Apart from the whims that should be satisfied, the craving woman is warned against showing fear or expressing ridicule or criticism for anybody, as the embryo might be moulded in the image of the person feared, ridiculed or criticized. On the other hand, she is encouraged to show appreciation for children. On seeing a child in its mother's arms, the craving woman expresses her admiration for it, whereupon the suckling mother would wish her to have one like it or better.

By the middle of the fifth lunar month, when the woman's abdomen usually becomes large, it is taken to mean that the child is well developed, and that the mother can resume her normal work. Relatives and neighbodri can come and visit her, wishing her to bear a boy, or whatever God wills! Up to the ninth month, nothing more significant happens except the preparation of the proper food for the forthcoming event. Food [431] presents, especially from the patrilineal side, are sent to the home, e.g. molasses, clarified butter and sugar. The women members may invite a [789] fortune-teller to give them some tidings, and dreams might be told also in connection with the expected baby.

842 The extent of the desire of women for children can be gauged by the multifarious devices to which they resort to induce pregnancy. A woman who does not bear children is called 'akir'—one who literally 'kills' her offspring; and the woman who has stopped bearing is referred to as 'mushahira'—being 'bound' or literally affected (in some way) by the moon. The following methods are used as aids to pregnancy in both cases:

Crossing the Nile in a boat is one of the ways of 'freeing the chaining' of a woman. It symbolizes the fact that she is moving from one state to another. She might visit a faraway saint, taking some food with her and filling her dish with some of the sand from the saint's grave to sprinkle [788] over her body on her return.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home.

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'.

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying),

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects.

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
431 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immedi-
602 ately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged
602 with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [843] [847]

2; Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

CHILDREN occupy a very important place in Egyptian society, as will be seen in Chapter VI, which is concerned with the numerous methods employed by women to ensure their producing offspring. 842

When a woman becomes pregnant she often hangs up in various rooms in her house pictures of legendary persons who are renowned not only for physical beauty, but also for their loving and gentle disposition. The expectant mother believes that if she constantly looks at such pictures the child to be born will resemble them in face and character. Anything and everything that she gazes at for any length of time is believed by her to affect her unborn child.[1] The first year that I visited Egypt I was on more than one occasion somewhat embarrassed by the numbers of women who would sit or stand around me when I happened to be visiting a village, staring at me without moving their eyes from my face. I was afterward told by my servant, who always accompanied me and assisted me greatly in my work, that these women were all expectant mothers and desired to have babies resembling me in face—hence the rigid stares! Since then I have frequently been gazed at in this manner, but have now quite lost my first feelings of embarrassment. 843 789

"Ah," said one woman when thus engaged in studying my features, "if I had a girl like her I could marry her for a thousand pounds!"

"Look well, O girl," replied my servant, "and if you are in a state of yearning you may have one like her!"

For a similar reason most women in this condition will endeavour to avoid ugly or unpleasant sights or people, fearing that their unborn infants may be thereby adversely affected. If a pregnant woman should see a dead person, man, woman, or child of either sex, and not take the necessary precautions, it is the generally 843

[1] This is also a common belief in England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭîn iblīz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

844 463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *baṭṭaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *karīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [982] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 84 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[794] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[796] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only—and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

F 843 821 761 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F [716] F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby. F [853]

F 761 895 853 825 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 853 778 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 762 789 853 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

F 846 854 776 779 789 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

Childlessness is a real

terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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843 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after
789 which period it will be immune.

The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all,
776 and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they
794 have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told,
753 only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is
[783] sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician,
[789] who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day
776 the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away
794 from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil.
798 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which
755 is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

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776 Another example of kindness shown by a *ḳarīneh* to her human
779 prototype is described on p. 102 (see also p. 235).

789 The following is a translation of the written charm (Fig. 33)
843 worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *ḳarīneh*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as by those professing Christianity. "In the Name of God of Triune nature, He is the Mighty Benefactor, Creator of all the powerful witches [evil women], Whom eye does not see and thought cannot conceive [mix with], Who knows what is before it is, before Whom the angels tremble with awe, and Whom the devils fear for His Power. All things in Heaven and on earth worship Him, and He is Ruler over all things. O God, by Thy Mighty Name and Powerful Arm and the Beneficent Light of Thy Face protect the bearer of this my charm—what is in her womb and who drinks [will drink] of her milk—from the devilish, cursed *ḳarīneh* by the power of this magic square and what of Thy Mighty Name it contains."

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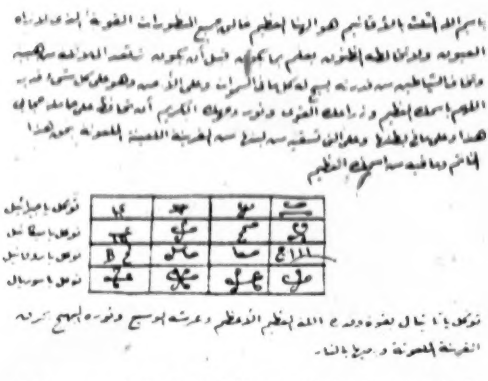

FIG. 33. CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

The probable meaning of the square in the illustration is, so I was told: "Make it your charge, O Gabrāīl, make it your charge, O Mikhāīl, make it your charge, O Rūfāīl, make it your charge, O Sūriyāl, make it your charge, O Māniyāl, by the power and might of the Mighty God, the Almighty, and His broad Throne, and His dazzling Light, to burn the cursed *ḳarīneh* and cast her into the fire."

776 There is another personality besides the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh*, called
779 the *ukht* (sister), which is believed to be born simultaneously with each human being. There is, however, no *akhkh* (brother), but

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the *ukht* only is attached to each individual, whether male or female. According to my informants among the *fellāḥīn*, the *ukht* of each person lives underground,[1] though it comes up on occasions. It resembles in character the human being to whom it is attached. Thus, if a man or woman is good his or her *ukht* is good, if bad the *ukht* is bad also. It is quite distinct an entity from the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh*.[2]

The following incidents happened last year in connexion with a woman and her husband, both of whom are well known to me. The woman in question was expecting to become a mother, and she and her husband were having a meal together one day when a cat came into the house and tried to eat some of their food. The woman hit the cat, which disappeared immediately. Being surprised at this sudden and miraculous disappearance of the animal, the woman consulted a well-known female magician who lives in her village. This magician got into touch with the "people beneath the earth," who informed her that the *ukht* of the woman mentioned above was angry with her, and wanted to know why she had hit her when she had come to her house in the form of a cat. The woman then said that she was very sorry, but she had not known that it was her *ukht* who had come in that form. The *ukht* said, "Why did you hit me? Did you not want me to eat?" She also complained that the woman to whom she was *ukht* had no *kūz* for her *zīr*, so that she (the *ukht*) could not drink when she came to the house. (A *kūz* is a large tin mug, and anyone who wants a drink dips it into the *zīr*—a large pottery jar, often kept in a special kind of cupboard, and containing the household water—and drinks from it.) The magician told the woman that she must buy a *kūz* and put it with the *zīr* in the cupboard, which was to be locked so that no one could get at it, and the *ukht* could drink without being disturbed.

It also transpired that the woman's *ukht* and also the *ukht* of her husband were both very jealous, because the man and his wife were always laughing together. The two *ikhwāt* (plural of *ukht*) said they did not like it, and that if this merriment between the pair continued all their children should die. The woman was to laugh only occasionally, and then all would be well. To my own know-

[1] See also pp. 69, 184, 186, 227.
[2] See my article on the subject, "The Ḳarīn and Ḳarīneh," in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lvi, January–June, 1926, pp. 163–169.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
797 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
794 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
753 was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [601]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 783 [852] Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket, which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days. The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 [143] If at the moment of birth the father is working in the fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah : 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

177 751 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus 85 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured 842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa, 536 and by Koranic precept : "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 482 When the time comes for her to go out — and this happens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries 853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before 857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rif* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13
EGYPT MR1

EF 278 M57

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

After the man had answered her request and she had gone away, I thought about that "remedy," but I did not find it in any way resembling *mānastir*, except that both of them are from inside the testicle (*hiṣya*) of an animal. I was astonished at that. The druggist said to me that in the past this article was asked in connection with this and similar "prescriptions," e.g. as a tonic for coition, and for use in pregnancy, etc. He had men in India searching for it. But to-day the new medicine has nullified these things, and traces remain [p. 29] only on the tongues of "old wives." The laboratory of G——— and F——— and D———[1] has made it easy for us to find this article, however, at a low price since it is imported from Europe. These are the results of the progress of industry. How marvellous it is of Science to abolish it at first in its capacity as a natural product, and then find it (or something counterfeiting it) by way of industry!

The true explanation. It is not possible to ascribe *mānastir* to the testicles of an animal unless we consider as true the theory of the Elixir of Judenau (cf. Part I, p. 88 ff) or the bringing back of youth, after old age has come, by means of the testicles of the Indian pig.

I have witnessed the injection of this quintessence during the days when I was in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital. Our Professor, Doctor Ḥasan Pāshā Maḥmūd administered it to an old man called Mūsā, the Shaikh of the village of Ṭurāna in the Province of Buḥaira, who was afflicted with the nervous trembling of old age. But he did not change anything of the state of the patient.

XV

CORNS

CORNS [lit. "Eyes of fish"] named "nails" (*misāmīr*) are one of the ailments [p. 30] of civilisation, or the excess of women

[1] [Here he mentions the names of certain well-known Cairo druggists in the European quarter. Tr.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *karīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *karīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *akrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāhīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [192] [842] [754]

A woman's *karīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *karīn* or *karīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *karīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *karīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *karīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *karīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *karīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*higāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *karīnehs* with King David- for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *karīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *higāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

703 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be
776 immune.

[751] The *karīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise
[843] she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrīts*, lives for ever.

If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born,
[304] when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of
751 the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes
[761] that her *karīneh* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *karīnehs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

776 A *karīneh* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed
753 the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *karīneh* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *karīn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *karīn*. When he is sorry and expressed
[756] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

776 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother
753 knows that her *karīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are
755 resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyūt Province there
778 is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fātimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *karīneh*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself
[787] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 7/1

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 7/1 A woman whose child is affected by her *karīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fātimeh.

755 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1/1 [See Category 116, plate facing p. 168 --Analyst]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirîbeh* made of *bûs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirîbeh*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karinch* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt. 755 [776] [825] [753] [771]

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karinch* during this dangerous period of seven years. 776 753

That a woman's *karinch* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karinch* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1] 776 775 842

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karinch*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karinch*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)." 776 843 751

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karinch* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.) [773] 2/n

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

2/n [See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

728
755
[164]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHÛN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S karineh.

751
843

باسم الله المتعلق بالأقانيم هو الإله العظيم خالق جميع المخلوقات القوية الذي لا تراه
العيون ولا تخالطه الظنون يعلم بما يكون قبل أن يكون تقدس الملائكة من هيبته
وتخاف الشياطين من قدرته يسبح له كل ما في السموات وعلى الأرض وهو على كل شيء قدير
اللهم باسمك العظيم وذراعك القوي ونور وجهك الكريم أن تحافظ على حاملة حجاب
هذا وعلى ما في بطنها وعلى التي تسقيه من لبنها من القرينة اللعينة الملعونة بحق هذا
الخاتم وما فيه من اسمك العظيم

توكل يا جبرائيل			
توكل يا ميكائيل			
توكل يا رفائيل			
توكل يا سوريال			

توكل يا تاتيال بقوة وقدرة الله العظيم الأعظم وعرشه الوسيع ونوره البهيج بحرمة
القرينة الملعونة وسعيها بالنساء

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

[illegible] KARÎN AND KARÎNEH.

[facing p. 168]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

The carrying out of a 'kaboos'—presenting oneself uninvited, secretly and suddenly at a 'place'—is another device to induce pregnancy. An old woman, or a young non-menstruating girl, is asked to collect some maize seeds from seven married women, who have been the only wives of their husbands. The old woman puts the maize into a pot to be cooked in the oven overnight. The woman who desires to become pregnant goes to visit, as if unexpected, the old woman, who presents her with the pot to walk over seven times, and then washes her private parts with the water at home.

Sometimes a woman desirous of pregnancy pawns her jewellery to a woman who is not menstruating, and asks her to put it underneath her pillow while sleeping for some nights. This woman does so and then puts the jewels in a pot filled with water. The first woman comes to visit her and to step over the pot seven times, followed by a wash similar to the previous one.

In the case of a newly-married girl who does not conceive, the ceremony of marriage is often re-enacted in the house but on a smaller scale by non-menstruating women in the same way as during the actual ceremony. The wife makes two dolls, one representing herself, and another the bridegroom. Only female friends and relatives are invited and the doll bride and bridegroom are tucked up in bed. This is supposed to relieve the wife from the first marriage shock which may have caused her inability to conceive.[1]

These are a few examples of the ways to which women resort for inducing pregnancy, and they all imply producing a psychological state for the attainment of release and embodying the sublime folly of hope found in magical rites.[2] In such practices, one can regard the connection between economic fertility symbols (earth, maize, jewellery, sand, water) and women's fertility as some survivals of reincarnation beliefs. Although in some of these practices one might get the impression of an atonement for a woman's evil intention (sense of guilt), the emphasis, as I gathered from my informants, was the 'evil eye' of others or their manœuvres to cause such sterility or 'binding'. Out of the sixteen methods collected, ten of them explicitly indicate accusation of others for such a state, a mechanism which some psychologists call 'projecting repressed hostility'.

Although a pregnant woman is theoretically advised not to work hard or carry heavy things during the ninth month, one often hears of women in childbirth who have just returned from the Nile (i.e. water-carrying),

[1] According to Frazer's analysis of magic, this could be considered as imitative magic, by performing what one desires to happen in actuality. To the same category belongs the taboo on pregnant women, especially after the seventh month, with regard to spinning, as the child might get entangled in her womb. In Silwa, contagious magic also exists in the so-called 'taking the smell of somebody' (riha), especially in cases of harm done through the evil eye, where a part of the 'envier's' clothes is taken and burnt with salt, to dispel his or her evil effects.

[2] B. Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, edited by J. A. Needham, London, 1936.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Siwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

844 or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [951]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter, molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 [183] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [006]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [080] [055] [082]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554
and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562
sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844]
ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431]
those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the
father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851]
wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one,
or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased
by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy
even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than
seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [782]
'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most
effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no
brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of
'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar-
riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584]
marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful
rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as
well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma.
Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are
taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is
brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and
this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562
arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593
is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is
always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the
one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they
get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My
informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an
occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her
father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers
are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by
sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father
as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583]
when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of
gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the
father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides
a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the
song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her
parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence
her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
431 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immedi-
602 ately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged
602 with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellamin MK13
Silwa

be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [843] [847]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn iblīz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

844 463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

If a midwife is called in to assist at a birth she brings with her the customary confinement chair (Fig. 28); for women in Egypt give birth in a squatting attitude. If this professional assistance is not required the woman squats without the chair, resting her arms on, and pressing upon, a sieve which stands on its side (Fig. 29). She leans forward on the sieve even if she squats on the chair. The sieve, which is a large one such as is employed in winnowing, plays quite an important part in all the birth ceremonies, as will be seen later.

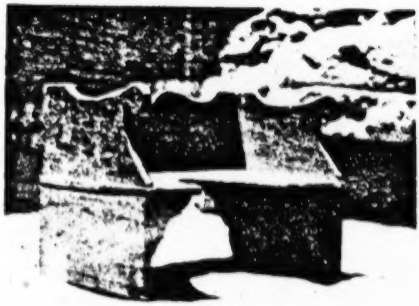

FIG. 28. CONFINEMENT CHAIR

It is the business of the female attendant or midwife, as the case may be, to cut the umbilical cord. The afterbirth is dealt with in a variety of ways. In many parts, if not all over Egypt, it is often called *el-walad et-tāni* (the other, or second, child), and some people regard it as an unfinished infant. If a woman is anxious to make sure of having another child she buries the placenta of the latest-born under the threshold of her house. She does this in order that when she desires to have another child she may be able to step over the buried placenta three, five, or seven times; for the belief is that its spirit will then re-enter her body, to be born again as a complete child in due course.

FIG. 29. WOMAN LEANING ON SIEVE

If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she

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845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
779 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
779 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[915]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

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Upper Egypt

such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

FA 765 292 822

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

FA 515 264 780

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

FA 581 554

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

FA 844

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

A [113]

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLXVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

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F A 844

give birth, with either foot planted on a brick.[1] From these two bricks was developed a structure resembling in outline the modern confinement chair (p. 63), but, so Professor Spiegelberg supposes, made of brick. A confinement chair of this kind was already in use in the Old Kingdom (2900–2475 B.C.).[2] It would be interesting to know at what date the wooden confinement chair replaced the brick structure. It may have done so at quite an early period, and "the brick," which is the designation of the bearing-stool even in a Nineteenth-Dynasty text, may be simply an archaism.

The midwife or female attendant in ancient times cut the umbilical cord[3] as she does to-day (p. 63). But unfortunately it is no longer the custom to wash the child immediately after birth.[4] This performance is now put off till the seventh day after that, and even then the child is only partly washed (p. 76).

A [793]

Importance was evidently attached to the placenta (see pp. 63 ff.) in ancient times; there seems to have been a priest of the royal placenta.[4] The umbilical cord seems also to have been preserved as it is to-day (pp. 64, 79), for in the Myth of Horus we are told how that god set out to obtain the umbilical cord of his father Osiris, which had fallen into the hands of Sēth, Osiris' murderer, and how, having won it from Sēth, Horus buried it in the place sacred to Osiris in Herakleopolis Magna.[5]

A [793]

F A 844 553 846

It is to be observed that the sieve played a part in ancient as in modern birth ceremonies (pp. 63, 79), for Anubis is shown trundling one in the scene in the temple of Ḥatshepsut at Deir el-Baḥri which represents the gods determining the duration of the new-born royal infant's life.[6] This determining of the duration of the royal child's life may be compared, perhaps, with the modern naming ceremony on the seventh day after birth (pp. 78 ff.). In ancient Egypt, however, a child's name seems to have been given it at birth,[7] and, anyhow in the case of a princely family, to have been also registered.[8] On the other hand, it is to be noted that

A [113]

[1] W. Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologisches Randglossar zum Alten Testament* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 19 ff.
[2] As can be seen from the determinative of the word in K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, § 1180.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[4] A. Erman, *ibid.*
[5] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, pp. 243 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[7] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 168 ff.
[8] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[9] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), p. 19.

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festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

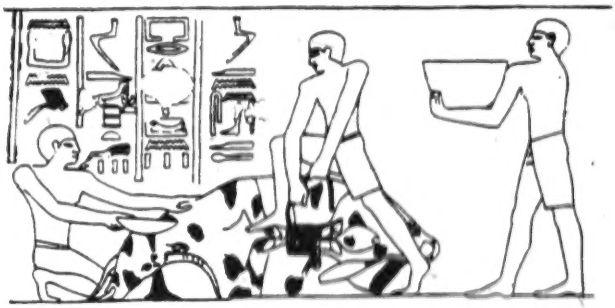

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

The following is one of a hundred examples. 684
Mahmoud Ahmed 'Abdallah was leaving his village 577
near Nag' Hammadi, one day in March 1937, to go as usual to the fields, when he learnt that his sister, a widow of thirty-five, had been seduced. Hearing this he returned at once to the village and went to his sister's house. Without uttering a word he seized the *fass* he had with him and split open the poor woman's skull. When the crime became known, the Maamûr of the Markaz, the District Judge, and the Inspector of Public Health went together to the spot. The man himself gave the police the weapon he had used to murder his sister, and after confessing his crime, declared that he had wanted to avenge the family honour.

The wife may be the real ruler of the household, but woe 593
to any woman who shows a lack of respect for her husband 562
by walking in front of him on the way to market, or by interrupting him in any way while he is talking or playing with his friends. He never calls her by her own name, but addresses her as: *Ya mara* (Woman!), *Ya bint* (Girl!), [601]
or *Ya Umm Ahmad* (Mother of Ahmad! — his son). He shows his supremacy here by treating her scornfully and giving no sign of affection. The older he gets, the more he demands and values this respect.

"My wife has borne me ten children", said a fellah. "Ten children; and not one of them squints or is blind. With them beside me I feel myself honoured and respected. Thanks to their mother, their feet have never wandered along the paths of shame. She wipes their noses and cleans their faces. She teaches them to kiss my hand when I come back from the fields, to rise when I come in, to serve me first, and never to smoke when I am there."

The peasant wife, who may bear children at any time 844
between the ages of fourteen and forty-five, gives birth in the simplest fashion in the world, sitting, like the women of Pharaonic times. Mishaps are rare.

But the birth is preceded and followed by a thousand 843
practices intended to bring the child fullness of health and happiness. The magic rites are far more important than hygienic precautions. The mother is firmly persuaded that whatever she looks at attentively or wishes for ardently while she is with child will have an effect on the baby. So she

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 783 [852] Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket, which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days. The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abriq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 [143] If at the moment of birth the father is working in the fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 751 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus 853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured 842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa, 586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 482 When the time comes for her to go out — and this happens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries 853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before 857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) (ʿʿa). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water. F 823 F [842 827] F [755] F [763]

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied." C 782 823

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth. F 843 844 26

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth. F 852

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes. F 764

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field. F 454 789 844

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two. F 842 812

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following F 553 852

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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tion, from which even the displaced functionary and his 541
abettors do not escape. The hangman's assistant of yesterday is sentenced to be hanged, the bastinadoer to be beaten, the *kashkatib* or chief secretary to imprisonment, immense taxes are imposed, and all decisions are set down on a sheet of paper. There is no pardon for the condemned unless on the payment of a few piasters as backshish. Thus they move from house to house, the taxes being levied in the form of backshish. Three days does the capricious rule of the ephemeral tyrant last; at length he, that is his dress, is condemned to death by burning, and from the ashes creeps out the slavish Fellah. In the times of good-natured Mohammed Ali the abu nerus is said to have ventured even to approach his throne, but the harmless jest has now fallen a good [182]
deal out of practice. The ancients also celebrated feasts when
the Nile was at its height, in the month of Tût, as, for in- [171]
stance, that of Hermes on the 19th of this month. The 527
anniversary of the opening of the canal is kept only at Cairo.

BIRTH-DAY CEREMONIES.

The monotony of the work-day life of the Mohammedan, [461]
interrupted by no Sunday, is richly and agreeably varied by domestic ceremonies and observances. However thrifty or niggardly he usually is, on such occasions he spares no expense.

When the time comes that a child is to see the light the 844
midwife makes her appearance with her seat, and displays the greatest activity on behalf of her suffering charge; female relatives and neighbours also come in crowds to encourage and advise. It is often sought to lighten the difficult task by
hanging opium about the mother, or making her eat the drug. [278]
The newly-born child is merely dried, not washed, and immediately laid upon a corn sieve; beside its head lies the knife with which the umbilical cord has been cut, and corn is scattered round about. This procedure is intended to drive [776]
away the *karina*, that is, the child's evil brother or sister from [753]
the spirit realm that always makes its appearance and tor-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
[262] melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they are invited for the following day. Above the head of the sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-necked (*dorik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subâ'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums, the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a
[431] sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[553] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [876] [877]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [783]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 [831]

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 842 [183] [581]

THE FELLAHĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

845 If a woman has lost several children in succession at birth she
776 thinks that somehow or other she has incurred the anger of her
784 *ukht* or *ḳarīneh*, or both, and that they have taken the children away from her. She therefore consults a female magician, who
791 gets into communication with these subterranean beings, and the
787 mother inquires what she has done to make either or both of them
776 angry. If the reply is that she has angered one or both of them
774 she must then bring bread made of wheat flour, of which both she
845 and the magician must partake. When the latter eats the bread it is as though the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* ate it, for they eat it through her. After this ceremonial eating of the bread these beings make peace with the mother and tell her that the next time she gives birth to a child, and on all subsequent occasions, she is to act in the following way. She must bury the placenta, together with a round, bun-shaped loaf of bread, made of wheat flour, called *khubz*, and a *raṭl* (rather more than 1 lb.) of salt, in a bowl (Fig. 30), covered by another bowl of the same shape, under the floor of her house. By this means the *ukht* and *ḳarīneh* are appeased and will not take the woman's children from her.

[415]

FIG. 30. JAR IN WHICH THE PLACENTA, TOGETHER WITH BREAD AND SALT, IS BURIED UNDER THE FLOOR

844 If a woman's new-born children have survived birth the midwife, or a female relative or friend, throws the afterbirth into the Nile or into a canal. As she does this, however, she must laugh or smile, for then the child will always be happy and cheerful. If, on the other hand, she neglects her duty in this respect the child will always have an unhappy disposition.

789 Some mothers, in order to ensure long life to their children, will take a small piece of the umbilical cord and wrap it in a cotton wick. This they put in a pottery saucer-lamp filled with oil, light it, place it in a little boat, and leave it to float down the stream. Others again—and this is a very common practice—will take a short length of the cord and sew it up in a strip of cotton material, which is then hung by a string from the child's neck. After a short time this, together with certain other charms to be mentioned presently, is sewn up in one of the small leather charm-cases, and must be worn throughout life. It is usual to hang

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *karīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḥṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 stained cloth. When the puppy is killed its head is cut off and
789 is pickled in salt, and it is worn by the expectant mother till
825 after the birth of the child, when it is transferred from her to the infant. My informant, a clever, well-educated Egyptian lady, told me that this is done because dogs are regarded as very unclean animals in Egypt, and that therefore the mother's *ḳarīneh* would
[774] not come near her unborn child so long as she was wearing the
[776] puppy's head; and for the same reason the child will not be attacked or injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh* while it wears this charm.

789 Another protective charm, worn by an expectant mother if all
843 her children have died before they have attained the age of seven
761 years, consists of the head of a hoopoo, a *ḍufr*[1] of a snake, a small
[825] piece of the under lip and of the ear of a dead donkey, a *nāb* (double tooth) of a camel, a *ḥirbāyeh* (chameleon), and a written charm. All these are hung under her right arm while she is pregnant. After her confinement the child wears these charms.

I saw a set of these charms which had been worn by a woman during the last two months of her pregnancy, only in addition to the above-mentioned articles there were seven threads of silk, which may be of any colour. While the expectant mother was wearing these charms they were divided into two packets, each done up in cotton material. When I saw them they had been transferred to her child, and had all been put together into a raw hide case. The child must wear this until death, and it is supposed to ensure it a long life.

It is the custom in many parts of Egypt for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. The photograph (Fig. 31) shows two such anklets which I obtained from villages in Middle and Upper Egypt.

845 If a woman has arrived at the time for her delivery, and she suffers much, but cannot give birth, she may sometimes crawl under
[825] the body of a camel seven times backward and forward, after which performance the child is born. The woman crawls from side to side of the camel, so I was told, not between its hind-legs.

If a birth is delayed for three days, and the woman is in constant pain, her husband must wash his right heel and she must drink

[1] The word means 'nail' or 'claw,' but here, perhaps, a 'horn' of a cerastes.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the water in which he washed it. Then he must walk round the village seven times, and while he thus perambulates he must not speak to anyone. If a passer-by salutes him in the usual way he must reply by touching his forehead with his hand, but he must not speak. 845

Immediately this walk is accomplished the child will be born.

It is said that a protracted birth never occurs if the husband and wife are both good people, but even if only one of them is bad it may still occur.

If a woman has one miscarriage after another she places the last-born embryo in a niche in the wall inside the house. She takes a red brick—*i.e.*, a brick that has been baked in a kiln, not sun-baked only — and pounds it into powder. She then mixes honey with this powder and eats some of the mixture every day for seven days. At the end of this period she takes the embryo and puts it in a bath, into which she steps, and, squatting over the embryo, she washes herself all over her body. The belief is that the spirit of the embryonic child will enter her body again, and that she will immediately conceive. It is necessary, however, that she and her husband should have marital relations directly after she has had the bath. The body of the embryo is put back into the niche in the wall after she has had the bath and before marital relations take place. It remains there always, but soon falls into dust. [833]

FIG. 31. IRON ANKLETS

845
842
779

[789]
[843]
[761]

When a child is born it is said that a new star appears in the sky. When the child dies, whether in infancy or at any later period, its star falls. Hence the falling stars.[1] The star falls two or three 843 842 761

[1] The same belief is current in some parts of England.

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F 843 821 761 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts F [776] thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven F days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was [853] last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F 761 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives 895 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, 853 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. 825 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly 853 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what- 778 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a 262 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must 789 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of 853 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

E 846 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, 854 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her 776 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of 779 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls 789 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

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I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

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members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

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845 789 hip. The other charm is burned, and while it is burning the magician repeats the inscription on it once, after which the child is immediately born. An exact copy of the charm to be hung on the woman is reproduced here (Fig. 124). There is no key to it, so I was told.

The inscription recited by the magician is from the hundred and fourteenth chapter[1] of the Ḳorān, of which the following is a translation:

[539]

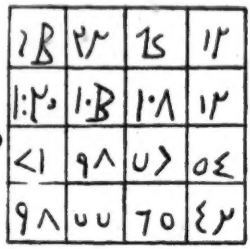

FIG. 124. THE CHARM TO BE SUSPENDED FROM THE WOMAN'S WAIST

"Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, that He may deliver me from the mischief of the whisperer who slyly withdraweth, who whispereth evil suggestions into the breasts of men [*i.e.*, the Devil]; from *ginn* and men." The magician then adds: "Make your servant so and so, the daughter of so and so [mother's name], bear quickly by the help of God Almighty."

755 789 776 Here is a cure for a headache: "Cure for a headache. Very excellent. The charm should be written on a piece of red leather and hung over the temple of the patient, and, whoever wears it, it [the headache] will certainly be removed by the will of God." These are the words of the medicine-man himself, translated as literally as possible from the Arabic. The inscription consists of nothing but letters, the first groups standing for Syrian names of God, and the others for the names of seven good sheikhs.

755 The following is a cure for fever. This prescription was given me by a sheikh who is renowned for his powers as a medicine-man, and he declares that by means of it he has cured many people. The sheikh takes four small pieces of paper, and on the first he writes "Hell is hot"; on the second "Hell is cold"; on the third "Hell is thirsty"; and on the fourth "Hell is hungry." All the letters of each word in these inscriptions must be well separated from each other. He then puts seven seeds of *kammūn iswid* (black cumin) on each piece of paper. Having done this, he takes a short, narrow strip of leather, which must be old, such as is used for making sieves for winnowing. This piece of leather must be divided into four portions, one for each paper. A candle like those used in Coptic churches is broken into four pieces, and

[1] One of those chapters of the Ḳorān which are often utilized as amulets.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her. 776 123 787 [791]

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy." 776 [152] [842] [754]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype. [751] [843] [845] [775]

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarīnehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant, 773 776 843 751 [791]

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

/80/

Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice. 755 184 562

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person. 755 787

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia. 128

The Elements of the Zar. 755 753

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it. [158]

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies. [845] [776]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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knife and an antimony stick. The child's eyes are treated with kohl as a protection against 'running eyes'. 844 [751]

The navel cord is cut to a repetitive refrain. In the case of a boy, relatives would be singing:

'Who supports his father
  except him who descends from his loins.
May your legs be fit for the stirrup,
  and your mouth for an answer.' [533]

For a girl they sing only one line:

'She will make her father enter into the shade! (i.e. into the cool)
  and she will visit him every day!'

The most dangerous period for the newly-born child and his mother is 'the first forty days'. This is the period of confinement for the mother as she is considered to be 'unclean' and cannot cook, wash or even say her prayers. She is called 'nafasia' (breathing woman) as if her breath were not clean, and this is the reason for her seclusion, as well as segregation from the rest of the household. She should take care of herself; she is advised not to move too much or to go out in the dark. She is usually fed on chicken, chicken broth, clarified butter molasses and other richly prepared dishes. She again becomes the centre of attention with respect to food given to her. 846 ● [783] [062]

On the other hand, the first forty days are regarded as 'the angelic period' for the child. He is guarded by angels against the 'evil spirits'. Yet the mother must remain in close proximity to the child, never leaving him alone, because if for any reason the angels were to neglect their guardianship, the child would be besieged by the devils. If the mother has to leave the child for a short time, someone else must attend to him. [776]

The next event in connection with the new baby is the official declaration of his name on the seventh day from his birth or sometimes at the end of the fortnight. For this purpose, a special ceremony is held called 'sobou' (related to the week). According to the village tradition the ceremony has a religious sanction from one of the sayings of the Prophet. It is almost universal in the village with regard to the naming of the first son, but less common with the succeeding sons. The most important feature in the content of the ceremony is the killing of a yearling ram (ikk), and thus causing the blood to flow, over which the baby is passed seven times. 'Blood flowing' is supposed to ward off the effects of the 'evil eye'. It is also considered as a sacrifice for the child's life, saving the child's life by giving the life of an animal. The traditional support for this is the story of the Prophet Abraham whose son Ishmael was saved by a heaven-sent ram.[1] Such a ritual is always recommended on the occasion of 553 [780] [755] [782]

[1] Ishmael according to the Koran, Isaac according to the Old Testament.

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, 553
as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier.

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, 656
the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that
still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but 845
always below the threshold of the house.

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she
is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have 846
elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded
throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and [176]
sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's [807]
occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told
him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father
has died.

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes [783]
ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing.

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the 846
child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or then 851
visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, 43
the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or
distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the
child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money
and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal
grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat
before his arrival.

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys 851
in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of 846
boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child,
accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some
elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new
scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding 858
his mother's or father's old wrappings.

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein 842
to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to [183]
have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of [581]
the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their
father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant,
Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the
"Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by
their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in
this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace
and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take

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562 It is almost a sin (makrouh) to evince any dissatisfaction on having girls.
842 One is usually reminded of the burying alive of girls in the pre-Islamic days, and how a Moslem should not behave likewise. In this connection, my informant, Ali, recited from the Koran. He continued to say that a father of so many girls is generously rewarded in the next world as he is sacrificing for them without any return. In fact, he continued, some people who have many girls are living quite well-off. They are living 'on their girls' wealth appropriated to them by God'.[1]

849 The events of pregnancy and birth occasion the exchange of many
843 social obligations amongst the womenfolk. Apart from actual help and advice of relatives during pregnancy or at birth, the birth of the child
431 marks the occasion for sending gifts and making visits (zwarat). Immedi-
602 ately a woman completes her forty days of confinement, she starts with her mother or older daughter, checking on who has sent her presents and
846 who has not, and from whom she is expecting to receive later. The failure
431 to conform to the expectations or the fulfilment of mutual 'visitings', or
602 to give the proper help at the right time would expose the people concerned to great blame, fuss and gossip. 'She has not come to give me a hand or paid me a "visiting" during the forty days or when I was
[578] "craving" ', is a plausible justification for a woman not to be on 'talking terms' with another woman.

602 Amongst women folk, pregnancy and birth are occasions highly charged with the rendering of social obligations and of drawing up the balance-sheet, as it were, of reciprocal obligations. Even blood relationship cannot override the emotional tension which occurs as a failure to meet the social demands. On the contrary, it accentuates it, and on such occasions one sees 'the pull and push' of kinship ties. While the fulfilment of social demands works for the cohesion and solidarity of the group, it carries with it the seeds of friction and misunderstandings.

843 It is to be noticed that the events attending pregnancy and birth, and most of what concerns them, are almost purely within the female purview. Men have little or nothing to do with them, not even in calling in the midwife. It is almost a taboo for a man to mention to his fellows that his wife is pregnant, and it is a topic avoided by men. It is very significant in this respect that the husband whose wife is in childbirth must absent him-
844 self from the house, and, if the delivery is at night, he has to sleep outside the house, either in a relative's house or in the guest house.

Enquiring as to whether there were any variations in the procedure of pregnancy and birth, my female informant told me that 'they happen in every family without exception or modification'. No woman in the village has been to a doctor or hospital for her delivery. She added: 'It is always better to die at home', a phrase which is usually said as a defence against going away for an uncertain project. It is also believed that one would

[1] For a discussion on the differential value of boys and girls, see also H. Granqvist, *Child Problems among the Arabs*.

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] 84 [847]

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553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

846 It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat.
[853] During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for
850 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

846 The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

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F 843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another
821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God
761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts
F [M6] thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven
F [853] days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F 761 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives
895 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens,
853 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die.
825 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly
853 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what-
778 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a
262 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must
789 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of
853 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

E 846 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant,
854 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her
776 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of
779 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls
789 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *'afārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *felláḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
876 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
794 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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F A 844

give birth, with either foot planted on a brick.[1] From these two bricks was developed a structure resembling in outline the modern confinement chair (p. 63), but, so Professor Spiegelberg supposes, made of brick. A confinement chair of this kind was already in use in the Old Kingdom (2900–2475 B.C.).[2] It would be interesting to know at what date the wooden confinement chair replaced the brick structure. It may have done so at quite an early period, and "the brick," which is the designation of the bearing-stool even in a Nineteenth-Dynasty text, may be simply an archaism.

The midwife or female attendant in ancient times cut the umbilical cord [3] as she does to-day (p. 63). But unfortunately it is no longer the custom to wash the child immediately after birth.[4] This performance is now put off till the seventh day after that, and even then the child is only partly washed (p. 76).

A [793]

Importance was evidently attached to the placenta (see pp. 63 ff.) in ancient times; there seems to have been a priest of the royal placenta.[4] The umbilical cord seems also to have been preserved as it is to-day (pp. 64, 79), for in the Myth of Horus we are told how that god set out to obtain the umbilical cord of his father Osiris, which had fallen into the hands of Sēth, Osiris' murderer, and how, having won it from Sēth, Horus buried it in the place sacred to Osiris in Herakleopolis Magna.[5]

A [793]

F A 844 553 846

It is to be observed that the sieve played a part in ancient as in modern birth ceremonies (pp. 63, 79), for Anubis is shown trundling one in the scene in the temple of Ḥatshepsut at Deir el-Baḥri which represents the gods determining the duration of the new-born royal infant's life.[6] This determining of the duration of the royal child's life may be compared, perhaps, with the modern naming ceremony on the seventh day after birth (pp. 78 ff.). In ancient Egypt, however, a child's name seems to have been given it at birth,[7] and, anyhow in the case of a princely family, to have been also registered.[8] On the other hand, it is to be noted that

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[1] W. Spiegelberg, *Aegyptologisches Randglossar zum Alten Testament* (Strassburg, 1904), pp. 19 ff.
[2] As can be seen from the determinative of the word in K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, § 1180.
[3] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[4] A. Erman, *ibid.*
[5] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, pp. 243 ff.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[7] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 168 ff.
[8] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[9] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), p. 19.

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festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
536 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [326] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shāban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
846 the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
kishk (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subû'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[782] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth 844
(masqat ar-ras).

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it 842
out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is
unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed
an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is 831
not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the
need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to
have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana).
One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and 832
hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like
hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard 842
of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her.

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy 846
and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the
evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of [754]
food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This
is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant
might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed
in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the
mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather
uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the
baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use
the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may [788]
the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a
child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared
afterwards.

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and intro- 851
duced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his
room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is
to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the
reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that
'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'.

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the 553
chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually 851
the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the
formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congrega-
tion like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes
of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a [562]
naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive
behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious
puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive.

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued [778]
a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth [843]
month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [847]

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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

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THE FAMILY.

837 Mohammed's dictum regarding wine is also true of love—it has many good sides, but also a great many and even more that are bad and dangerous. The Prophet has therefore cut Cupid's wings as well as he could; by the armour of concealment he protected the sexes from the swiftly wounding arrow of the god, and granted to his faithful believers the joys of domestic love in full, perhaps in too full, measure so soon, and to as great an extent as they could do homage to them. Matches are made early, and love's thirst is usually quenched in an orderly and legitimate manner. Fallen [848] virgins, illegitimate children, bachelors, and old maids hardly [589] exist in Mohammedan countries, although there are perhaps more unfaithful wives and husbands, and especially wives who have gone astray and been divorced, than elsewhere. Existing regulations render it difficult for these faithless members of both sexes to meet directly; but this is managed [548] by the herd of procurers and procuresses, who are comparatively numerous in the East, though held in the deepest contempt. "Women contrive to meet their gallants, even [538] though shut up in a box," says the Oriental himself in a very common proverb, as well as in many a tale. Adultery com- [689] mitted by a woman was punished with drowning down to a short time ago; among the ancient Egyptians by cutting off the nose. But the Mussulman is proud with regard to the above-mentioned state of matters, and listens with scorn to the statistical revelations made by the states of the West, which suffer from all kinds of moral sores no less than the more dignified "sick man."

595 Nothing shall here be said in approval of polygamy, but to those who have had lengthened opportunities for watching its effects it does not appear as a rule so black as Western imagination is accustomed at a distance to paint it. A thorough panegyric would perhaps show that it even possesses some advantages on moral grounds; and in the West also it certainly exists in some social circles. In the East it has prevailed from the earliest times, from the Bedouin to the king,

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[844] or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately
[843] the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives
[843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the
[591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk
[834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs
[825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but
[851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

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due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [176] [80]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [183]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 43

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 842 [183] [58]

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seven sons or more are always held up as a model and an enviable ideal, 554
and one of the most favourable prayers to any man is to wish him 'seven 562
sons and to perform seven pilgrimages'.

The greater status deriving from having boys shows itself in the differ- [844]
ence of presents given to the midwife on the birth of a boy compared with [431]
those on the birth of a girl. The announcer of the birth of a boy to the
father would ask him for a present, and would warmly congratulate him, [851]
wishing him to have a brother for example for the boy if he is the first one,
or to complete the seven. In the case of a girl, the father is usually teased
by telling him: 'May she never sneeze.' The saying is that 'a boy is a joy
even if he is stillborn'. Another saying runs, 'A boy who dies is better than
seven girls'. It is also interesting to notice that fathers and mothers swear [980]
'by the neck' of their boys, and not girls (by their lives), as one of the most
effective and binding oaths. Girls jeer at their playmates who have no
brothers, and swear by the life of their own brothers.

The fear of having a daughter is mainly connected with the sense of
'shame' which a girl might bring to her family, especially before her mar-
riage. It is the responsibility of the male line of her family to arrange her [584]
marriage, and clothe and feed her if she is not married. If any disgraceful
rumour about a girl or a woman spreads in the village it is the father as
well as the husband who has to discipline the girl or bear the social stigma.
Girls at a very early stage, on seeing a moth hovering round the fire, are
taught to repeat 'Fire is preferable to shame'. It is also said that a girl is
brought up only to be taken away by a man (when she is married) and
this means a loss to the family.

Yet the value of the girls is often justified and rationalized by other 562
arguments. On being told of the birth of a girl, a father would say, 'She 593
is God's creation; and who knows where the blessedness lies?' A girl is
always referred to in this context of the evaluation of the two sexes as 'the
one who will usher her parents into the shade' (i.e. coolness) when they
get old, as the girl is considered more compassionate than the boy. My
informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'visiting one's daughter is usually an
occasion for having either a pot of tea or some food; she can never let her
father leave her husband's house without "wetting his throat".' Mothers
are very keen on having daughters to help them in domestic work, by
sending them on errands to neighbours' homes.

One of the folk songs refers to the daughter as 'appointing her father
as the sole arbiter in a gathering'—which is her engagement gathering [583]
when the father fixes the bride-price 'which is the daughter's weight of
gold and silver'. The song goes on to say that through the daughter 'the
father stretches his roots to feed other places' and thus the girl provides
a means of extending kinship relations through her marriage. What the
song does not explicitly say is that a girl is no financial strain on her
parents as they do not provide any marriage payment for her, and hence
her marriage is not a burden on the family as with the boy.

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be more attached to his home if his head has first 'fallen into it' at birth (masqat ar-ras). 844

There is no policy of any kind for limiting birth, either by spacing it out or by practising birth control. Birth control in the modern sense is unheard of, and in any case it is considered as a religious sin, and deemed an interference with God's creation.[1] A part of the married male ethos is not to regulate his sex desires, but to give them full play whenever the need arises. Continence is not a desirable thing for a married man, but to have sexual intercourse with his wife is a good religious deed (hasana). One should not counteract sexual desires but rather stimulate them, and hence the various devices such as special food and aphrodisiacs like hasheesh and opium are resorted to for sexual potency. The writer heard of no woman who has practised any devices to confer sterility on her. 842 831 832 842

The period of the 'forty days' is enshrouded in a great deal of secrecy and psychological delicacy. For fear of the evil eye, the influence of the evil spirits, or sterility, the mother should adhere to the rigid system of food, minimum movement and general seclusion and other taboos. This is the period in which another woman who wants to become pregnant might suddenly 'press' on her, and thus she could be hampered or delayed in her next pregnancy. However, when a visitor comes to the house the mother covers herself as well as the child and pretends to be feeling rather uncomfortable, either groaning or suffering from pain. In referring to the baby, visitors must be careful not to praise it openly, unless they use the safeguarding phrases such as 'God preserve him' (or her), 'may the Prophet's blessings be upon him'. On enquiring about the sex of a child, if it is a boy, his sex is usually hidden at first to be declared afterwards. 846 [754] [788]

Concerning the child itself, one observes that it is announced and introduced in various ways. In the case of a boy, a 'gong' is produced in his room every morning and every evening; the purpose, as it is believed, is to make the child brave and not to fear any unexpected shock. Yet the reaction of the neighbours on hearing the sound is one of recognition that 'the so-and-so's are sounding for their child'. 851

The naming ceremony in the case of a boy is the second link in the chain of introducing the child to his neighbours and relatives. Actually the name is usually agreed upon before birth, though the ceremony is the formal occasion for declaring the name. Women have no formal congregation like the men, but a small portion of food and meat is sent to the homes of the female relatives. It is to be stressed that very few people have a naming ceremony for the girls, which is also a male gathering. The motive behind the girls' ceremony could be regarded as a kind of religious puritanism to counteract the pre-Islamic sin of burying the girls alive. 553 851 [562]

[1] A scholar of al-Azhar told the writer that the Grand Mufti of Egypt recently issued a 'fatwa' permitting the use of contraceptives and sanctioning abortion before the fourth month, that is 'before the child is gifted with a soul'. [798] [84] [847]

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553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

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The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organisation of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. 220.

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553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, he girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [757] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

● 852 On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

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days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later, while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their siblings outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

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862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. 264 They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while [805] those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is 852 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three 304 and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the [264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy [867] and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

852 The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is 304 to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the [144] Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

852 Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they 431 are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an [118] increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

431 In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Hag Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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851 The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the
852 fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing
867 his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs
[152] of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two
[156] sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between
[164] the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's
[152] death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

852 During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however
154 allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

852 One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and mar-
585 riage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care
[759] must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over
852 the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connec-
842 tion between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. 220.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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fact that the mother, in taking the child to the Nile, throws his foreskin, enclosed in a loaf of bread, into the water, and washes the 'mirwad' (antimony stick) used in the operation in the waters of the Nile. This relationship is also evidenced by the fact that circumcision, like weaning, should take place at least two or three days before the appearance of the new moon, otherwise the child is liable to be 'tied up' (mushahir), the consequence of which may be that the wound might not heal quickly, or that the child might eventually be sterile.

Children show great interest in the circumcision ceremony, as it is a great occasion in which they associate with the circumcised child, eat with him, enjoy themselves, inviting people for the ceremony, or going on the children's round with their palm-tree branches, or getting sweets and peanuts during the procession. They usually tell you of the good food they had or the new clothes they wore on the occasion of their younger sibling's or cousin's circumcision. On asking some of the schoolchildren about events during which they felt happy, they invariably gave the answer of a sibling's circumcision or marriage. The educative significance of the ceremony for the older children, who witness and attend this public celebration, though indirect, is quite obvious. The social norms based on mutual obligations, the meaning of kinship and family solidarity, are concomitant in the ritual ceremony.

One cannot discuss circumcision without reference to the psycho-analytical explanation of the ritual. Freud sees in it the castration complex, which is derived from the Oedipus situation. He states that in some primitive societies circumcision is common and is performed at the age of initiation into manhood, and it was only as a secondary development that it was transferred to the early years of life. He continues: 'It is of great interest to find that among primitive peoples, circumcision is combined with cutting the hair, and knocking out of teeth, or is replaced by them, and that our children, who cannot possibly have any knowledge of this, in fact, treat these two operations, in the anxiety with which they react to them, as equivalents of castration.'[1] In Silwa such an anxiety concerning castration is evident in the adults' threatening their children to re-circumcise them even if they are already circumcised, and it manifested itself in one of the children's dreams described later.[2]

Some psycho-analysts maintain that circumcision, as an initiating ceremony of the child by his elders, helps to conduct the growing children across those difficult thresholds of life transformations that demand change in the patterns, not only of conscious, but also of unconscious life.[3] Géza Roheim maintains that circumcision represents a process of the child's growth from the passive Oedipus situation to the active orientation towards the loved object. 'The period of life which conditions the transition from

[1] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, footnote, p. 153. [2] See Appendix XI.
[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series, New York, 1949, p. 10.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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852 mother to wife is dramatized. It is subject to operations: it is represented in symbols.'[1] The circumcision ritual, as practised in Silwa, lends itself to a considerable degree to Roheim's explanation, especially when one remembers such rituals as the disposing of the foreskin by putting it in a hole in a loaf of bread, the cleansing of the antimony stick in the Nile, the going round of the boys, holding the long palm-tree sticks in their hands, the admonition to the circumcised boy not to show his penis to anyone but his mother before it heals, as well as the other beliefs connected with fertility.

Sociologists, however, cannot be satisfied with such explanations. Viewed as an element in the totality of the cultural situation the 'castration' problem cannot be fully understood in the orthodox Freudian connotation with its biological bias. A sociological interpretation has to include the questions: Why does a child who is considered to be circumcised by 'angels' have to undergo the ceremony? Why is such an operation dramatized on such an elaborate social occasion? Indeed such a ceremony telescopes the individual's development as a process in which he is caught up in a net of reciprocal social obligations infused with moral and religious sanctions. Considering 'castration' in the context of social organization in Silwa, and as the villagers view it, it must be regarded as a social occasion with a religious sanction for declaring publicly the alignment of the child to his sex group. Thus, the child would identify itself with the social role of father or mother by becoming aware of the social implications and consequences of behaviour relevant to its sex group. The community submits its children to an operation around which everything is done to heighten the moral and social temperature of its culture and to induce a state of nervous super-excitation through which the youngsters may receive the adult's indelible stamp.[2]

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[1] Géza Roheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, p. 16.
[2] See Edwin W. Smith, 'Indigenous Education in Africa', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*; and B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London, 1927.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

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854 for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a
852 metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The
[176] water is called *moiyet el-ṇalāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels
[174] meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

[291]

FIG. 36. YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRĪḲ

[176]

852 On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

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of rings. On one of the baskets is placed a large winnowing sieve, 852 in which the child sleeps all night. When the midwife comes on the following morning, and both mother and child have been washed, some of the grains from one of the baskets are put in the sieve, the baby also being placed in it. The midwife then tosses and shakes the baby in the sieve, its mother meanwhile banging the edge of the metal basin with a tin mug. The striking of the basin by the mother is not, I believe, always done, but on one occasion when I was present at this ceremony the mother acted in this way. The tossing and shaking of the child in the sieve is repeated several times, after which the grains are returned to the basket. The midwife now takes the child in her arms, and covers it with a cloth of white cotton on which are placed some of the grains from one of the baskets. Having first carried the child into all the rooms on the ground floor, she then goes outside the house, sprinkling some of the grains wherever she walks, and repeating "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet") over and over again during the whole of her perambulation.

[789]

FIG. 37. UMBILICAL CORD IN COTTON WRAPPING, AND OTHER CHARMS SUSPENDED FROM IT

Left to right: twisted iron wire, string of seven grains of beans, and bag containing samples of the seven ingredients of one of the baskets.

The child is now taken back into the mother's room, and the midwife blackens its eyes with *kohl*, a bottle of which she has brought with her. She dips a feather into the *kohl*, and, having opened the child's eyes, passes the feather across each of them in turn. After thus painting the eyes she fastens round the child's neck the cotton case containing a piece of the umbilical cord, to which are 852 302 789

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852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
291 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

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[463]
[291]
[285]

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

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FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the [856] child wide open and beautiful eyes.

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

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527 852 believed to be beneficial to the child. I have been present at one or two such ceremonies, and the following description is typical of all.

A ram had been purchased for sacrifice, and the services of a butcher engaged for the slaughter of the animal. When I arrived at the house I was conducted on to the roof, where various members of the family were awaiting me. The ram was also there, in happy ignorance of its fate. Presently the butcher arrived, and [782] when he had ascertained that his knife was sufficiently sharp the poor animal was made to lie on the ground on its back. Then with a "*Bismillāh er-Raḥmān er-Raḥīm*" ("In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful") the butcher cut the ram's throat. I must confess that I did not see this part of the performance, for I closed my eyes and blocked up my ears, telling the people to let me know when it was all over. The carcass of [465] the animal was then hung up and skinned. The skin was, I believe, given to the butcher, in recognition of his services. A [789] good deal of the blood was preserved in a large bowl, and the house-door was sprinkled with it, a large dab of it being smeared on the centre.

852 761 The reason for the slaughtering of the ram at a *mūlid* for a child may be that a life is thus given for a life, and so this sacrifice of the animal will ensure the life of the child.

527 852 537 The child's mother and some of her female relatives now set to work to prepare the meat and cook it for the large number of guests who would assemble at the house in the evening, while I retired for a short rest. At about seven o'clock I returned to the house, where great preparations had been made, and where a con- [554] siderable number of visitors had already assembled. The seat of honour had been reserved for me, and soon after I arrived a sheikh celebrated for his excellent chanting of the Ḳorān entered with his assistants. I had brought a number of boxes of cigarettes with me, and some of these were now handed round by my servant, while coffee was brought for me. Newcomers constantly arrived, till every available seat had been taken, both on benches and on the floor, and then the sheikh began to recite. Such recitations are always intoned, and are repeated entirely from memory. The performer nearly always places a hand against one side of his face while he recites, and sways in rhythmic accompaniment to his chanting. This particular sheikh is renowned for his voice,

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and warm exclamations of approval were heard on all sides as he proceeded. Finally he stood up on a high bench, and, one hand against his face and the other holding a rosary, worked himself up to an even greater pitch of fervour, gesticulating with the hand which held the beads. The audience too became more and more enthusiastic, and there were constant cries of "*Yā sheikh!*" ("O sheikh!"), "*Aiwa, keda!*" ("Yes, thus!"), as we might say, "Yes, go on!" One man at last got so beside himself with emotional fervour that he rose abruptly from his seat, tore off his turban, which he hurled at the sheikh, and then clasped him by the knees. Others too followed his example, flinging themselves in admiration on the sheikh. F 527 852 537

When the recitations had gone on for some time there was a pause, and more coffee was handed round, and also more of my cigarettes. During this interval one of the sheikh's assistants went the round of the guests, to inquire of each whether he desired a *Fātiḥeh* to be repeated for himself, or for friends, the latter being mentioned by name. Each person presented the assistant with a small sum of money. Very many *Fātiḥehs* were said for me and for my family, while I made similar requests for several of my village friends. Then the recitations began again, and shortly after there was another pause as before. I am afraid to say how many boxes of cigarettes I distributed, but I do know that they were thoroughly appreciated. F [272] F [123]

This performance was continued till nearly midnight, when at last I rose to take leave of my friends. My departure broke up the assembly, and the rest of the guests quickly dispersed to their several homes. I was told afterward that it was one of the most successful *mawālid* that had ever been held; never had they had so many cigarettes to smoke, and never had the sheikh and his assistants received so much money! I regret to say that the child for whose benefit this *mūlid* was held died rather suddenly before I left Egypt.

Among the Copts the child receives its name at baptism, when the parents take it to the church. Total immersion is the recognized form of baptism among the Copts, and, according to Dr A. J. Butler,[1] the rite is permissible only in certain seasons of the year, and no child should be baptized during Lent, Holy Week, or at Eastertide. The same authority also states that a boy must be F C 553 852

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii. p. 264

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forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

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C
[1065]

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

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In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

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F C 302 852 798

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

E [29] [532] [142]

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

E [262]
F C [465]
E [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

F C 302 852 718

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

F C [431]
F C [535] [151]

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home. F 782 892 F [178] F [761] F

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared. E 852 ● 304 E [302]

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading E [463] E [431] [465] F C [292]

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

the horse, he is paraded through the village, accompanied by musicians. If two brothers are to have this operation at the same time they ride together on one horse. When the perambulation of the village is over the boy is taken home, and all the friends who have placed money on his face, and also the barber, are provided with supper. Music plays an important part at this ceremony, and the musicians keep up a constant beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of bagpipes. When the guests have finished supper they all, including the musicians, take their departure. On the following morning the barber only comes to the house and is first paid by the parents, who give him anything from one or two pounds upward. The child is then taken hold of and told not to be afraid. Some one tries to attract his attention, while the barber seizes this opportunity to cut off the foreskin. The boy wears a white *gallabīyeh* for this occasion, with long sleeves, in one of which the foreskin is tied up. The barber then ties the boy's mother and maternal aunt together by binding a turban round their throats, and drags them outside the door of the house. Friends, who by this time have collected outside, come into the house and present the barber with more money, and he then takes his departure. The wound is washed every day, and is anointed with some healing powder, which is, I fancy, *ḥenna*. The foreskin remains in the sleeve of the boy's *gallabīyeh* until the wound is healed, during which period the white gown must also be worn.

FIG. 40. CAP WORN BY A BOY AT HIS CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY

A charm consisting of short lengths of the mid-rib of a palm-branch, deeply notched along one side, is worn by boys after they have been circumcised to keep the wound from going septic, and to ward off the evil eye. Such a charm is worn for seven days after the operation, being suspended from the neck by a string.

No reason could be given as to why the mother and maternal aunt were tied together by the throat and thrust out of the house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I suggest that it may possibly be a way of emphasizing the fact that the boy has now definitely joined the male community by undergoing this operation, and that therefore he is no longer under the control of his mother and her female relatives. This is a pure guess, and is brought forward only as a possible explanation of this somewhat curious custom. 852

It is a common belief all over Egypt that the souls of twins when they have passed babyhood often leave their bodies at night and enter the bodies of cats. These animals, therefore, are usually very kindly treated. The following stories were told me in connexion with this belief, and my informant declared that they were true and that he knew the people concerned. 774 825 845

In a small village in Asyūṭ Province there was a boy who was one of twins, his twin, however, being dead. One night a cat came to a house and clambered on to the flat roof, upon which were some of the usual mud granaries. Some *kishk*, which is made of wheat mixed with milk, dried in the sun, and then cut up, was stored in one of these receptacles. It is often offered to visitors as a great delicacy. The cat knocked the lid off the granary which contained the *kishk*, jumped into it, and began to eat some of the contents. A member of the household happened to go on to the roof, and, seeing the granary uncovered, immediately put the lid on it without noticing that the cat was inside. It remained covered for three days, keeping the cat a prisoner. During this period the boy mentioned above remained motionless and unconscious on his bed, his soul being in the body of the imprisoned cat. [251] [262] [574] 753 774 845

After the third day some visitors arrived at the house where was the granary in question, and one of the family went to get some of the *kishk* out of it to offer the guests. When the lid was removed the cat jumped out and ran away. Immediately after this the soul of the twin returned to his body, and he rose from his bed quite well.

One evening a cat in whose body the soul of a twin happened to be temporarily incarnate was struck on the head by a woman. On the following day the twin in question came to this woman and accused her of striking him the previous night, pointing out to her exactly where she had hit him, and complaining that the blow had caused him considerable pain.

If a cat is killed while the soul of a twin is in its body the twin dies also. For this reason cats are rarely killed. 761 774 825 845

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

751 idea is, I suppose, that it is on the first camel that the eye would
754 be cast. A pattern is sometimes cut in the hair on one or more
822 of the legs of a camel. I was told that this is often done to keep
231 the evil eye off that part of the animal's body. For if its legs are firm and well covered with flesh some one may cast the eye over it, and the camel will fall down.

754 A certain woman in Upper Egypt who was well known to possess the evil eye saw a very fine camel coming along one of the paths in the cultivation. "Oh," she said, "what a splendid camel!" whereupon the animal fell down and broke one of its legs. The truth of this story was vouched for by my informant, who declared that he saw the accident happen and heard what the woman said.

852 If a child under eight years of age is thin and delicate the mother,
755 or, if her husband will not allow her to do so, a neighbour, will
781 carry it to the bank of the Nile on the first day of the inundation,
261 taking with her some dates and *kishk*.[1] She then stands at the edge of the water, holding the child in her arms, and makes it throw the dates and *kishk*, one by one, into the river. As the child throws in each article it must say to the water, "As you increase in depth, may I increase in strength!" After this the woman undresses the child and bathes it in the river. It is believed that the child will then grow steadily stronger. Angels are supposed to be in the
[776] water, and they, it is thought, will take the dates and the *kishk*, and, in return for these gifts, will remove the weakness from the child.

755 A child may suffer from a cough accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. This may happen at any time until it has passed the age of seven years.[2] To cure it the mother, or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a woman friend, takes the child early in the morning to the enclosure (*zarībeh*) in which the sheep and goats are kept in the fields at night. She enters the *zarībeh* and hands the child over to the shepherd, who lays it on its back on the ground, and, taking a knife, places the blunt edge against the child's throat, pretending to cut it. The child will then start crying, whereupon the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it.

000 Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed

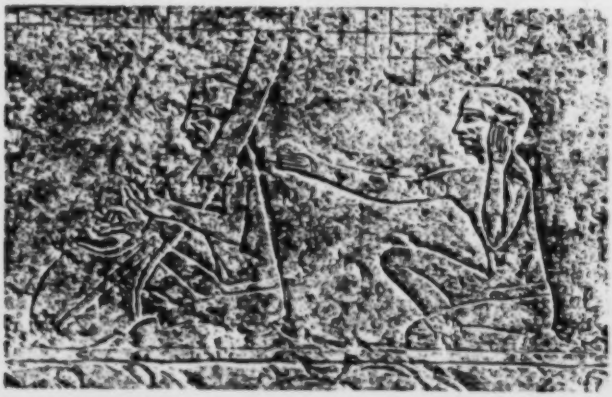
[1] Small cakes, sometimes round like large marbles, and made of flour and milk.
[2] After this age the mother's *karīneh* cannot injure it. For fuller information on this subject see pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852



A [532] [534]

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, A 533 537 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]
[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Copts MR10

F A 533 537 775

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

F A 852 302

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

F A 304

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

A [113]

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole village belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at *sîga*, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The 1923 Constitution decreed that education should be compulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun to take effect. Schools are being established all over the countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages, schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places that within living memory had never seen a teacher are provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child population will be receiving instruction ([41]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers and wounded them. The peasants care little for education. They only want their children to help them to increase their earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him and teaches them the Koran.

or like a silver thread in the distance. He resorts to it more often than to his fellowmen. He does not pray to it, as his ancestors did, but he constantly visits it. The Nile is in his blood. There is the same intimate bond between the Nile and the fellaheen as between the sea and the fishermen of Brittany. They even call it *el Bahr*, the sea, and their fields they call "shores" (*el rîf* — plural *el ariaf* — the usual word for the Egyptian countryside) ("a). At High Nile they believe women to be more fertile and men more healthy; marriages are most often celebrated at this season. If a child is sickly or ill, his mother takes him on the Nile at this time, and makes him throw sweets and dates into the clayey waters, with the words "Oh Nile, let my strength grow like your depth". A dying fellah, before he breathes his last, is given a final draught of its living water.

In the Coptic Mass there is the following prayer: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to bless this year the water of the river. By Thy grace bring it to due height. Gladden the face of the land, that the fields may have water and the crops be multiplied."

The silt of the Nile has its part also in the rites of life and death. The fellâha, when her time is coming, crawls to the brink of the water and takes up a handful of moist earth, which she will swallow at the time of delivery to ensure a successful birth.

When the *mizayen* cuts the child's hair for the first time, the hair ceremoniously cut off is not flung to the winds, but carefully rolled into a ball of earth.

Professional mourners bedaub their breasts, heads, and arms with mud as a sign of grief. The body is put into the earth without either coffin or clothes.

The fellaheen bury in the earth the jar containing their savings, and charms which they wish to take effect. Every birth affects the soil; the after-brith is buried inside the house, and the umbilical cord, wrapped up in a little bag with a few grains of corn, is dug into the father's field.

The fruits of the earth are still more closely involved in this peasant mysticism. The analogies between vegetable life and the peasants' own extremely physical existence make them believe in an interplay of fertility between the two.

The ceremonies of the seventh day, when the newly-born child is washed and given a name, often include the following

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
248 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture *itself*, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

39.

The New Railway.

539x 496 [785] [103] [31]

A girl, named Dināre wishes to go to Ṭanṭa, to the tomb of Shēkh Aḥmed. (Compare No. 8—9.) At the time of the origin of this little song, the railroad from Cairo to Alexandria had probably just been built. (It was opened in 1856.) Ṭanṭa lies in the province of Ṛarbîye, about fifty-four miles from Cairo, on the railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; the capital of the province of Beḥēre, Damanhûr, lies on the same railroad, still nearer to Alexandria, something over thirty-six miles from Ṭanṭa.

Dināre 'ālet: Yamma,
ana rāiḥe-s-Seiyid azūr,
warūḥ balad el-Beḥēre
watfarraǵ 'al-bagūr.

Dināre said: "Mother,
I am going to visit the Seiyid
And going to Beḥēre
To look at the railway".

Circumcision.

40. 41.

539x 852 304

Most boys are circumcised when six or seven years old, and the day is always celebrated by some festivity, at which the boy is decked out and led through the streets.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

40.

×539 The father hurries home to the festivity.

304

● 852

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābîš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adūit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

[114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands râqide instead of rāide.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send
574 for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly
796 hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may
[852] perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions
[585] or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month.
[692] Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls,
264 and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over
796 the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last
[202] meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to
796 begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the
785 sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and
[202] also of feasting, for which the women during the following
[533] month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The
[262] women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that
[202] the fast has now come to an end. After supper every-
[785] body goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

844 ments the poor child of humanity till it sickens and falls
[776] into convulsions, which are therefore also called karina (see
[753] chap. vii.). Immediately after the birth the mother receives
melted butter with honey and fenugreek, and instead of
[262] fasting she must daily eat at least a fowl or a good piece of
meat, which her female friends and neighbours give her. On
the sixth day the mother in her turn sends these a plate of
846 *kishk* (decoction of wheat and sour milk) as a sign that they
are invited for the following day. Above the head of the
sleeping child is placed on this night a pitcher, hung with
[789] gold coins and lighted with tapers, the pitcher being long-
necked (*dorik*) in the case of boys, short-necked (*kulleh*) in
that of girls.

846 On the morning of the seventh day (*yum es-subâ'a*) the
852 house is filled with female visitors. The child is placed upon
a sieve, tapers are fixed upon metal plates and on the point
of a sword, and the child is carried in procession through the
whole house, while the midwife scatters *bissle*, that is, wheat,
[787] barley, pease, and salt as provender for the wicked spirits.
[776] The child is shaken in the sieve, being thereby believed to
lose fear for the rest of its life, and its eyes are held up to
the sun to sharpen them. The cymbals and small drums,
the singing and trilling of the women, make the outer world
acquainted with the joy within the house. The guests present
[431] the mother and midwife with money and gold, for which
[262] they distribute parched chick-peas, St. John's bread, and
walnuts.

But the father must also keep the seventh day as a festival, especially if the child is a boy, though in many cases he does not dare up till this time to look upon his own child, since he might possibly, and quite against his will, do some harm to his tender offspring by a glance of his eye. He invites his friends to a feast, and entertains them with Koran reading, zikrs, and similar pious amusements, or sends for instrumental players, singers, and dancing-girls. The son is brought in a sieve and shown to the guests, who rejoice with the father,
[431] and perhaps also leave some gifts. A plate of candy-sugar
[553] is now sent to the kadi or some other theologian; he sucks

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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it, and lets the sweet fluid trickle from his consecrated mouth into that of the child, and "gives him the name out of his mouth." This is accordingly a kind of baptism. It is well known that among the Moslim, as among the native Christians, and till lately among the Jews of the West, only personal (and not family) names are used even in public life. For distinction the personal name of one's father is joined to one's own name, as Mohammed Soliman, that is, Mohammed, son of Soliman. Many have of course a surname, but it is generally personal, as for instance, the Bald, the One-eyed, the Falcon, and so forth, and only in rare cases is retained as a family name. In recent times the desire of acquiring a family name is showing itself, especially among government officials. This custom has of course the advantage that it leaves no room for pride of noble or patrician descent. Only the descendants of the prophets, the *sherifs*, of whom there are millions, pride themselves on their birth, and generally marry only among themselves. Still more the Bedouin, who is said to be able to repeat his pedigree in personal names alone up to Abraham and Adam, like the genealogies in the Bible, and who knows the pedigree of his horse equally well.

On the fortieth day after childbirth the mother goes with the child to the bath, and gets forty dishfuls of water poured over her head if her offspring is a boy, and thirty-nine if it is a girl. The child also is now bathed for the first time, and mother and child are now clean and purified.

CEREMONIES PRELIMINARY TO FAMILY FESTIVALS.

The more important family festivals, as a circumcision or a marriage, are often preceded by a whole round of preliminary ceremonies that last for weeks, or even months, and take place every evening. The master of the house prides himself in giving a feast that will be long spoken of. Every evening he gathers together his friends in his hospitable dwelling, and provides for them amusements and entertainments of every form and kind. At present chess, draughts, dominoes, and other games are played, but not for money, or at most for a

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

846 It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat. During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing
[853] it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for
852 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

846 The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

862 The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between
842 lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant,

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [840] [577]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the infant to social discipline as early as possible.[2] 862 [828]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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853 hibition of incestuous marriage between boys and girls who have been
582 nursed from the same breast (foster brothers and sisters). A few incidents occur of women nursing other women's children, even when the mothers are alive, but only for special reasons, e.g. when the mother's milk is not sufficient, or when a mother has a thin underweight baby, giving hers to a fat mother with fat babies. The incidents are known, and the marriage taboo is observed. Yet such wet-nursing rarely occurs among close relatives, where future intermarriage of children is anticipated.

853 Significant, too, is the belief that character traits can be transmitted
828 through the mother's milk. This is mainly emphasized by the mother's folk. Through the mother's milk the child becomes like his maternal uncles. 'If the child becomes like his maternal uncle, then he is worth praising, if he becomes like his father it is better to throw him in the sea.' The paternal side, while admitting the influence of the mother, teasingly imputes the unusual traits to her, while the strong traits are traced to the father's people. 'If the boy is not a good boy, two-thirds of his character is attributed to his maternal uncles; if he is a capable boy, then he has done no injustice to his father.'

However justifiable the claims may seem, the mother's milk is recognized as a very important factor in determining the child's character. The advice given to a man in search of a wife is to 'search for the maternal uncles of his children', as the boys would be like them through the influence of the mother's breast. With regard to this, Ali told me that the ancestor of the village (as well as other villages), G'afar, is of a higher rank of honour compared with Abdullah ibn al Zubair, the grandfather of another group of villages in the same province of Aswan. The reason is that though the two grandfathers are relatives of the Prophet of the same degree, yet the latter is not on the same level of honour because his mother and maternal uncles were slaves, while the former is of doubly honourable parentage. It is also said that 'as the roots spread and feed surreptitiously one has to choose the maternal uncles for his children'.

In this light, it is appropriate to discuss Granqvist's statement that the Arab families having Negro servants are afraid to let their children be wet-nursed by one of them, because they might acquire that 'unreasonable crossness' which they claim to characterize the Negroes. In Silwa the fear extends not only to Negroes, but to any strangers 'whose origin is not known', and who might interfere with the purity of the child's character by making it unstable, as homogeneous origin leads to a consistent and reliable character. To say that a certain person 'has origin' is to commend him, while saying he is a 'mixture' is to condemn his character. Evidence is seen in the fear of the villagers to have any mixture in either wet-nursing, or marriage, with the family of carpenters, potters and water-carriers.
582 Though the people of these families are lighter in skin than the villagers, and many of them comparatively well-to-do, they are considered as aliens and their origin is unknown. The case of the daughter of a village man

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of gossip and warning against such mixture. 582

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth. 853

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting. 856

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food. 862

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circumcision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive. [821] [842] [304] [821]

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its 854

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adapted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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being treated in this manner, and it seemed to be a somewhat painful process. However, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and these women do endure considerable discomfort in the course of their toilet. 302

The toffee-like substance described above is also used by women in a similar way in order to pull out any hairs that may be growing on their legs.

Most women and girls paint round the eyes with antimony (Arabic, *kohl*). It is kept in a small bottle, generally of glass, called *mikhaleh*, and is applied with a short stick with a blunt point. It is regarded not only as a beautifier, but also as a cure for sore eyes. [278] [415] [755]

Scent is used by both sexes, some of it being of a very pungent nature. In some parts of Egypt it is taboo for a man to use scent while his wife is suckling her child. If he disobeys this rule the child, it is said, will come out all over in spots. A man whom I knew well used some scent on one occasion while his wife was still suckling their youngest-born. The child got nasty spots all over its body, and the mother told me that it was her husband's fault, because he had been putting some scent on his moustache! 784 853 302 753

I have sometimes heard English people remark on the dirty habit that the Egyptian peasant women have of wearing long dresses which trail over the ground, brushing up the dust in clouds as they go along. It is, of course, a very insanitary practice, but the wearing of short skirts would be looked upon as most immodest. A woman's legs should never be exposed, except from dire necessity. There is also another reason for the trailing skirts. Most peasant women walk barefooted, and so leave clearly defined footprints in the dry, dusty soil. A woman can be injured magically through her footprints, and so the long skirt acts as a safeguard, brushing over and thus obliterating them. 291 515 [754]

Little girls wear very bright-coloured cotton frocks, which reach almost to the ground (see Fig. 17). The women and older girls may wear such frocks indoors, but when they walk abroad, either to shop, to fill their water-jars, or to visit their friends, they wear a long black dress over the coloured one, and a thick veil, shawl-shaped, over their heads. 291 [462]

I was told by a friend some few years ago that in Sharkiyeh Province the women wear long white veils, on which are several gold or silver ornaments. These ornaments are in the form of 291 301 554

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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F 843 minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another 821 explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God 761 at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts F [761] thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

F 846 Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven F days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was ● [853] last confined will have no milk for her baby.

F 761 If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives 895 birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, 853 the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. 825 Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

F 789 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly 853 conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by what- 778 ever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

F 846 If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a 262 woman who has a child under seven days old that person must 789 not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of 853 her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

F 846 When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, 854 or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her 776 relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of 779 this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls 789 of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed 243
in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a 262
kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* 264
(macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p.81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old. A F 853

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is A F 852

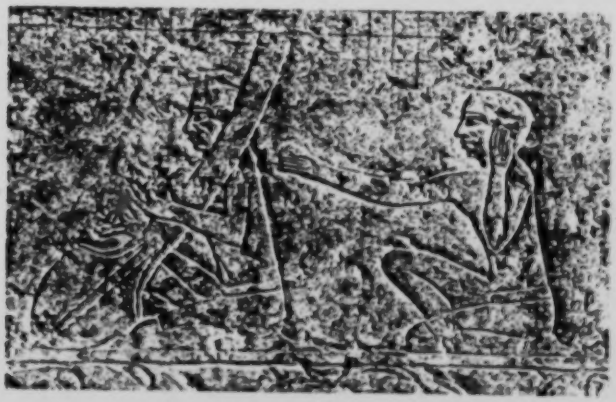

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

A [532] [534]

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin? F A

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god, 533 537 [152] 775

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165. A [113]
[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

T

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

177 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

553 rite. Three rush baskets filled with different kinds of grain
852 are brought into the room. One supports the sieve in which the infant is lying. When it is time for the bath, the midwife shakes the sieve, as if to sift both the child and the corn. Then she puts the grain back into the basket, wraps up the child and sprinkles a few grains upon it.

853 The word *fitâma*, used for the weaning of children, is
243 also used for the tenth and last watering of the maize. Sweet
431 cakes are given to the workers that day, as to the mother,
465 for it is the last day of suckling.

243 Harvest is always accompanied by symbolic acts.
777 Before reaping begins, the best ears are taken and plaited
789 into a kind of doll called the 'Bride of the Corn', which is hung up in the house to bring good luck during the ensuing year. Similarly, to bind the chain of life, the biggest grains are mixed with the seed for the next sowing, and a few fine loaves are slipped into the heap on the threshing-floor to be winnowed and sieved.

782 Mgr Khouzam, reporting on his pastoral visit in Novem-
789 ber 1937, wrote as follows: "On entering their houses, I blessed water, bread and corn. They drank some of the water and used the rest to sprinkle themselves, their cattle and their houses. The corn they flung into their fields. As for the bread, I was made to break it and eat a little of it. The rest they kept among their stores that God might bless what they had laid by."

789 The joy of harvest shines also on those who have not
465 ploughed, but whose work in the village has benefited the
431 whole community. Tradition allots the first fruits of the
735 harvest to the reciter, the barber, the cantor of the mosque,
246 the schoolmaster and the carpenter. After these have claimed their sheaves, the poor come to glean their share. Cotton-picking, however, gives rise to no sort of ceremony. This is perhaps because cotton has only recently been introduced; or because it is grown for profit and not for daily bread (").

245 The date palm, on the contrary, is as old as Egyptian agriculture itself, and figures at all times in the life of the people. They turn to this tree for shade and for roofing, for beds and coops, for ropes and brushes. We have seen its

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

553 This celebration could also take place in the case of a married couple who
851 have had no children for a considerable length of time, and suddenly have a girl, whom they would like to value as a boy. A man who had no children from his first wife could also celebrate the 'sobou' of his first child—a daughter, from his second wife. The 'sobou' ceremony for the succeeding boys is usually held by the comparatively well-to-do people, and one cannot fail to note the social significance of the celebrations. It is a display of one's economic ability to be able to afford killing a ram and
[554] offering wheat bread and vegetables. Thus the continuing of 'sobou' ceremony for all the boys adds to one's social prestige.

851 The third stage of his introduction is the 'balila food' with other children after the end of the forty days. Though nothing outstanding happens during the meal, the implication is that the child, finishing his 'angelic period', would mix with these children later.

The fourth stage is the formal and informal visits of the mother and child to other people or the latter coming to her house with presents.

846 It has been mentioned that during the first forty days the child remains in the closest contact with its mother practically throughout the whole of its waking as well as sleeping hours as she lies beside it on the mat. During most of this period the mother nurses the child while she is facing
[853] it. This close bodily proximity establishes the first educational relationship for the child. Yet this is not the sole relationship, even at this period, for
850 the importance of other people for the child's education is symbolized by the act of 'teaching' (talkeen). For this purpose 'a good man' or 'a good woman' is chosen to perform this act with the boy or the girl respectively. The chosen person eats from a sweet thing, either a date or a piece of sugar, which would then be given to the child to suck, and this is followed by prayers for the child. Through the 'talkeen' the character of the 'good man or woman' is supposed to be transmitted to the baby. When the child grows older reference to the person who 'taught' him usually crops up in assessing his character and temperament.

846 The disposal of the child's navel cord during the first forty days is of special social significance. After cutting the boy's navel cord, the father takes it to the field, there to eat some previously prepared food. After the meal, the father buries the cord in one of the divisions of the field. The income of this section is appropriated, at least theoretically, to the boy, and his 'luck' is gauged according to the yield of that area. Sometimes the boy's cord is buried below the threshold of the Kuttab (the village Koran School) as father to the wish that he would go to the Kuttab to 'memorize the Koran'. In the case of a girl, the navel cord is buried below the threshold of the house or kept in a small box. It is quite obvious that the difference in the disposal of the navel cord reflects the distinction between the prospective spheres of work for the two sexes.

854 In discussing the early training of the child during the first three years, the first important feature that looms large is the close physical proximity

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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not only during the first forty days but which is also sustained till the arrival of the next baby. According to the family structure in the village, there are invariably at least two grown-up women attending to the rearing of the child, or sharing in the child's care, e.g. maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, sisters, paternal or maternal aunts, or brothers' wives. As the newly born baby, or even any child, has no special cradle, cot, or bed, it always sleeps beside the mother or sits on her lap. After the forty days it may be picked up by relatives. 854

During the third and fourth month, the child is usually held horizontally with the mother's hands underneath its legs and head. During the fourth month it is held vertically, supported under the arms, and can be carried against the mother's breast, being supported with her hands under the buttocks. During the fifth month, he is normally held astride the mother's hip.

Nursing is one of the first basic needs of the child which in this community conforms to no schedule. It is guided only by two principles. The first is that the child is given the breast whenever it cries. The second is that it is suckled when the breast becomes 'compassionate', in other words when the mother's breast becomes full. It is said that when there is 'compassion' in the breast the child is hungry, and therefore the mother must offer it to her baby. The reciprocity between the baby's need and the breast is recognized to be one of the determining factors in suckling. It is true that in Silwa, as in Artas, the mother's breast is the symbol of compassion.[1] Nothing is more binding in the mother-child relationship than the memories of 'stomach enveloping' and 'breast-feeding' which are symbols invoked by mothers to remind their sons or daughters to be obedient, or to come to their help in old age. 'I enveloped you for nine months and have fed you with my breast' is supposed to be one of the most effective and compelling entreaties. In this connection, Ali related the story of the Caliph Harun al Rashid and Gafar al Barmaki, his vizier, whom the former decided to kill, and imprison or disperse the rest of his family, after he feared that they were plotting to remove him from the Caliphate. Harun carried out his decisions in spite of the entreating of Gafar's mother, who had breast-fed the Caliph and who had implored him by the milk she gave him, and the locks of his hair she had cut off and kept with her. 'This is', remarked Ali, 'an example of tyranny that overrides one's duties towards his breast-feeder who is like a mother.' 853 [826] [593]

It is because women can provide their babies with milk that they are considered to be endowed with compassion. This is one of the tangible arguments for the value of having girls, who would be a source of compassion not only for their children, but also for their parents. [842] [562]

The time and frequency of suckling varies from day to day and from child to child. A child who often cries is regarded as a weakling and hence its need for more suckling. A mother of a four-month-old child, who was

[1] H. Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs*, p. 107.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of gossip and warning against such mixture. 582

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth. 853

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting. 856

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food. 862

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circumcision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive. [821] [842] [304] [821]

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its 854

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk
863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, the girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an
[827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia
[157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age
852 of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are healed, earrings are worn. The custom is gradually dying out in the case 301
of boys, with the exception of the first son, whereas it is still universal with all the girls. Boys are expected to discard their silver earrings by the age of eight or nine while the girls do not discard them until they are replaced before marriage by larger golden earrings.

At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish, thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their siblings outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have [788] more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, [195] grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1] 513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

There is another aspect of the high mortality rate of children, which is not confined to the Silwa community, but applies to the rest of the country. Infant mortality has an obvious effect on the stability of marriage relationship, as a woman that bears children who do not survive is in danger of being divorced by her husband, for she is considered the same as one who cannot bear children at all. The larger the number of children surviving, the less likelihood there is of divorce.[1] Hence, the dire need to prevent such a disaster by women who resort to many devices for pregnancy or warding off the evil eye, some of which were described earlier. Official statistics clearly show the relation between divorce and the number of children born or surviving; the latter case is shown in the following table.

TABLE III

The relation between divorce and the number of surviving children in percentages[2]

No. of Children	*Divorces*				
	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
None	74·7	76·0	77·0	76·8	77·8
One child	16·3	15·78	15·3	15·3	15·0
Two children	5·08	4·78	4·52	4·54	4·2
Three "	2·18	2·10	1·95	1·90	1·77
Four "	0·985	0·907	0·754	0·712	0·778
Five "	0·398	0·395	0·316	0·348	0·332
More than five children	0·318	0·222	0·245	0·186	0·205

This high mortality rate for this age group is partly due to the onset of various child diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, diphtheria, as well as endemic diseases such as dysentery. As mentioned earlier, the sickness of children at this stage is acknowledged by the villagers themselves and sometimes attributed to acute states of jealousy from siblings, or to the exposure of the delicate child to the evil eye.[3]

On the whole, the family treatment of the infant is relatively more protective and more attentive compared with the later period of childhood. Nursing children usually fare better than their older siblings in health and appearance. The protective attitude towards nurslings and toddlers could

[1] M. Hamanain, 'Infant Mortality in Egypt', Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished), London, 1940, p. 228.

[2] Worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 51.

[3] According to *Vital Statistics* in Egypt, diseases responsible for infant mortality according to their death roll are infectious diseases, respiratory system diseases, diarrhoea and congenital diseases.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
854 achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the
[96] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that
145 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

857 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over,
[866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant
857 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters
593 or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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159 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [179] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *felläḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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854 Numbers of these prophylactics may be seen hanging from the
755 necks of the hapless infants.

The various primitive medicinal remedies, well known to, and
755 used by, all village matrons, are of such a nature that one wonders
854 how any child manages to survive at all. Most of the women have
164 a deeply rooted objection to going to a doctor for advice, supposing one to be available in the neighbourhood ; and I have found it hard work to overcome this prejudice, even in the case of people who know me well and who have every confidence in me. It is en-
[944] couraging to hear that the Egyptian Government has recently allocated a certain sum of money for the purpose of starting baby-welfare centres. If only these institutions can be got into good working order, and can be utilized for the purpose of training young girls in the proper care and management of children, it will be a big step in the right direction, will ensure a much stronger and healthier peasantry, and will put an end to a vast amount of unnecessary suffering. During the years I have lived among these people I have had hundreds of sick children of all ages brought to me, and it has been heartbreaking to realize, as having had no medical training I inevitably must, that I am quite incapable of dealing with the terrible diseases from which they are often suffer-
[984] ing. As will be seen in some of the subsequent chapters, a great
[515] deal of this sickness is due to superstition—taboos against washing, for instance, being very strict.

Much good has, of course, been done by the dispensaries, which
743 in the past were run by Englishwomen ; but they are naturally
758 limited in number, and the mothers will often defer taking their
197 children there for advice and medicine till it is almost too late, or,
164 at any rate, till the child has become very ill indeed. I myself had the privilege of seeing something of what was accomplished by an English lady at one of these dispensaries during the first three or four years that I resided in Egypt. I can bear witness to the splendid work she did, and I know how much she was loved and respected by the hundreds of poor women who brought their children to her for treatment. I am sure, from what I have heard of similar institutions in other parts of the country, that the same good work has been done by many others in the different provinces. The number of these dispensaries is not great enough to meet the crying need, and those that do exist have to be supported by funds from the Government, for they receive practically no support, so

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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such a charm from the neck, the charm-case hanging under the right arm. I am told that a small piece of the placenta is sometimes used in this way instead of the cord, but so far I have not come across this usage myself. 789

Another method employed to prolong a child's life is the following. If a Muslim woman has had several children who have all died in early infancy, when another is born she asks a Coptic woman to give her *barakeh* (blessing, good luck), in order that the newly born child may live. The *barakeh* she asks for is either a part of a dress which has been worn by the Coptic woman or her husband, or else a dress which has belonged to one of their children. The dress *must* be that of a Christian, not of a Muslim. Among the Copts this custom does not exist. I asked why a Muslim should ask for the dress of a Christian, and I was told it was because they are good people. 845 789 777

A woman who has lost several children and wishes to ensure that the newly born infant will live acts as follows. She carries her baby in her arms, and, with a basket made of palm-leaves on her head,[1] goes from house to house begging for *ḥaseneh* (charity) for her child. She will do this however rich she may be, behaving as if she were a very poor woman. Some people may give her money, others *battaw* or *khubz* (two kinds of bread) and other articles of food. She will then distribute these gifts among the poor people of the village, even if she be as poor as they. She believes that, as the result of this action, God, or her *ḳarīneh*, will allow her to keep her child. [285] [482] [431]

On many different occasions women have brought their babies to me with the request that I would spit into their mouths, in order to give them *barakeh* and make them live long! Also I found that many of my old clothes that I had thrown away were torn up, and small pieces of them given to various mothers in the village, who hung them on their babies as charms to prolong life. One expectant mother came and begged me to let her have one of my old frocks, in order that her child might be born on to it! She, poor thing, did not get her request granted, and I regret to say that her baby died very soon after birth! 789 854 123 [844]

Some women kill a puppy at the seventh month of their pregnancy. The puppy is killed over a cloth, on to which the blood flows. As soon as the child is born it is wrapped in this blood- 843 789 825

[1] The ordinary basket, called *maḳṭaf*.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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number of crosses is placed in that part of the room where the child lies. It is believed that by this means no *'afārīt* can come near the child and that the mother's *ḳarīneh* cannot injure it.

Every human being is said to be born with a double, which is quite distinct from the *'afrīt*,[1] and it is called, in the case of a man, the *ḳarīn* (colleague, companion), in the case of a woman *ḳarīneh*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart, according to the prevailing belief among most of the *fellāḥīn*. The *ginn*, or *'afārīt*, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth," but they are separate beings from the *aḳrān* (plural of *ḳarīn*), though the two communities are in touch with each other.

The *aḳrān* are believed to be of different colours, some being white, some black; their looks also vary, as some are beautiful and some are ugly. This belief is easily accounted for, as each person's *ḳarīn* is a facsimile of himself or herself, and doubtless the colours are racial distinctions. The *aḳrān* are not, I believe, always malevolent, though stories of their mischief-making propensities are commoner than accounts of their good deeds.

Not only do the *aḳrān* resemble their prototypes on earth in person, but also in character—in fact, they faithfully reflect in themselves all the actions, both good and bad, of their earthly duplicates. Thus, if a man or woman gets into a temper his or her double does the same; if he or she suffers pain and sickness, so does his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh*. This point was brought out clearly one day three years ago when a large number of women had come to see me and to have their eyes doctored. One of them was speaking about her *ḳarīneh*, so I said, "But your eyes are very bad now, what about those of your *ḳarīneh*?"

"Oh," she replied, "her eyes also are bad."

"Poor thing," I said. "But who is looking after her eyes?"

"Why, your *ḳarīneh*, *gināb es-sitt* [honoured lady]," the woman immediately answered.

The following is another example of the intimate connexion between a human being and his or her double. When an argument begins between two or more men or women and a mischievous bystander wants to lead them into a real quarrel he will take two bricks and place them on their ends, each tilted against the other, or he will take off one of his shoes and place it on the

[1] See p. 237.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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843 ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which
876 no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her
994 *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

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[854] [291] [142]

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FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this
[753] was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was
854 brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot
164 with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give
515 her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and from what the woman said I fear that it was syphilis from which he was suffering. Anyhow, she told me that if the father or mother suffered in this way their children were never washed at all until they were old enough to wash themselves. Two doctor friends of mine confirmed this, stating that they knew the practice to be a common one among the peasants. As for the child which was brought to me, I am glad to say that I at last persuaded the mother to wash it to a certain extent, and I gave her some medicine. This happened a few years ago, and on my visiting the same village again some time later I was glad to hear that the child was well and flourishing.

FIG. 35. FROCK AND HOOD MADE OF SACKING

The same woman had lost several children in early infancy before this particular infant was born. The child was wearing a peculiar dress, made of sacking, and with a hood in one piece with the frock (Fig. 34). The woman informed me, and I have been told the same thing by others, that this dress was put on the child to make it live. The dress must always be made out of a sack which has contained raw cotton; no other kind will do. Two such dresses were made and given to me (see Fig. 35).

On the seventh day after the birth a midwife comes and washes the child, as stated above, and also the mother. The water used

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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854 for washing the child is obtained the night before and put into a
852 metal jug with a long spout called an *ibrīḳ*. This is stood in a metal basin, and both are placed near the mother and child. The
[974] water is called *moiyet el-ṭalāyikeh* (water of the angels), angels
[974] meaning in this connexion the *ḳarīn* of the father, the *ḳarīneh* of the mother, and the *ḳarīn* (or *ḳarīneh*) of the child. The *ibrīḳ* is decorated in different ways according to the sex of the child. On the occasion of the birth of a boy I observed that a rosary (*sibḥeh*) belonging to the father was twisted round the *ibrīḳ*, while a handkerchief belonging to the boy's sister was tied round the top of the vessel. On another occasion, when a girl was born, the mother's gold necklace and some brightly coloured silk handkerchiefs were fastened round the *ibrīḳ* (see Fig. 36). This decoration is done, so I was told, to appease the *malāyikeh*, who would then do no harm to the child or its mother. After the child has been washed a man of the same age as the father of the infant must drink the water that remains over in the *ibrīḳ* It is believed that this will ensure the child's growing up into manhood.

[291]

FIG. 36 YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD WITH DECORATED IBRÎḲ

[976]

852 On the seventh night (*i.e.*, the evening preceding the seventh day) two or three large baskets, each containing salt, beans, seed of *ḥelbeh* (fenugreek), lentils, wheat, clover, and maize, are placed in the room occupied by the mother and child. Sometimes one of the baskets may be filled with bread, this being often in the form

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs 862
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XII

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN AND MEDICINE-WOMAN

THE village magician, whether male or female, often combines the practice of medicine with that of magic; indeed, it is difficult in many cases to distinguish the one from the other, so closely are they allied. Many of the cures are magic pure and simple, and when some herbal mixture is prescribed it is, more often than not, administered by the village 'doctor' to the accompaniment of the recitation of some magic spell. Without this addition many of the peasants would consider the medicine valueless so great is their belief in the efficacy of magic! 756

In a village where I have often resided for two or three months at a time there lives a woman who is renowned for her goodness. All her fellow-villagers have the greatest faith in her, and sick people beg her to come to them and cure them. She sits down or stands by the sufferer, and, holding a short length of dry maize-stalk, passes it round and round his or her head, repeating prayers and passages from the Ḳorān (Fig. 121). The stalk must then be either burned in a fire or thrown into running water. It is believed that the complaint passes into the stalk and is destroyed in the fire or carried away by the water. Twice over, when I was unwell, this woman was asked by one of my village friends to pay me a visit. On both occasions she acceded to the request, and, after she had finished her performance, the stalks were burned, and my friend declared that she soon noticed a decided improvement in my condition. 755

It can be readily understood that in these Egyptian villages, where dust and flies abound, and where the villagers themselves are so ignorant of hygiene, eye-troubles are very common. It is appalling to see how defective is the eyesight of many people of the peasant class and the amount of eye-disease, if not actual blindness, that prevails; and all this in spite of really excellent eye-hospitals controlled by the Government. Unfortunately, the seeds of disease are sown in childhood, and even babyhood. Until the women 164 515 854

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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are less ignorant, and learn to realize the importance of keeping their babies clean, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the doctors to combat the many eye-diseases that cause so much suffering to hundreds of the peasants. With conditions as they are, cures for sore and inflamed eyes are much in demand and are numerous. The following are some of the remedies for eye-trouble employed by the village medicine-man or medicine-woman.

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[756]
[291]

FIG. 121. A MEDICINE-WOMAN PASSING A PIECE OF MAIZE-STALK ROUND A FEMALE PATIENT'S HEAD TO CURE HER OF ILLNESS

The medicine-woman whose methods of healing I described above has a great reputation as an eye-doctor. Those who suffer from inflamed eyes and swollen eyelids often resort to her for treatment. She takes a lump of sugar, and, turning back the inflamed eyelid, rubs it inside with the sugar. "Black blood" comes away after this operation, so I was told. She then takes a large onion, extracts the juice, and mixes with it some salt. This concoction she drops into the eyes of her patient. "It is very painful," my informant told me, but she added that it did a lot of good. While the woman is rubbing the inside of the eyelid with the lump of sugar her patients often stop up their ears with their fingers, as this is supposed to decrease the pain of the operation. For three days afterward the eye, or eyes, must be kept covered with a handkerchief, so that no air can get in. At the end of the three days the woman gives her patient a second dose of the onion

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abriq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wished to witness his "operation" myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The "operation" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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854

One of the songs with which the mothers quiet the little ones, and in which one often seeks in vain for the connection. This song, with a few variations, was heard by Goldziher in Cairo in 1873. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft 33, p. 612.)

Ya naṭara, ṣubbīha,
ḥalli-l-wizz ye'ūm fīha.
Bint uḫti 'ar'a 'ar'a,
ḥadha-d-dīb u-rāḥ yir'a,
5 *'ar'ašha taḥt et-tir'a.*

O Rain, pour it out!
Let the geese go swimming in it!
My little niece is scab-headed, scab-headed, [164]
The wolf has caught her and gone to eating,
5 He has gnawed her to pieces in the canal.

1. Compare No. 17, l. 2.
2. Let it rain hard enough to form puddles, in which geese can swim.
3. Owing to the filth in which the country children grow [515] up, scabby heads are not rare.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

593 On the whole, the structural attitude of husband to wife is one of possession and protection. While the husband assumes the major role in all the activities outside the house, the woman rules almost supreme in matters connected with the household organization.

The second pattern of relationship is that between father and children. With his children, as with his wife, the father avoids excessive intimacy in order to be respected and obeyed. By keeping social distance, he can be regarded as the most powerful agent in administering the moral and social code of conduct. Through his curt and abrupt admonitions he controls both his sons and daughters. In practice he has more to do with his sons, while the mother has more to do with her daughters, but of course there is a great degree of overlapping. There are no serious clashes between parents as to their respective rights of rearing the children. The mother always tries to keep her children quiet while their father is in the house.

The absolute authority of the father over children is due to the fact that [611] they belong to him and his family of orientation. Yet it is also recognized that only the mother and the mother's people can provide the immature children with affection and tenderness. According to Moslem law, imma- [586] ture children, in case of divorce, can be kept with the mother till the age of seven for a boy, and the age of nine for a girl, while the father sends the expenses of upbringing to the mother. If the mother dies the care and [855] upbringing of children is usually entrusted to their maternal aunt or maternal grandmother.

The authority of the parents is sanctioned by the Koran. Obedience of [579] children to their parents comes next to the Moslem's major obligations to God and the Prophet. Disobedience to parents ('okouk al walidain) is one of the major sins which is harshly punished in the next world, and, according to Ali, even in this world. A disobedient son or daughter will never live a successful or happy life on earth, and the parents' curse might even affect the son's or daughter's children. To obtain the parental blessing, he continued, is more important than to inherit land or wealth from them, as having their blessing is a prerequisite for both piety and success. Thus, if the father is to wield authority and provide protection, the son or daughter must show 'filial piety' and submission to him as well as to the mother.

One can cite many avoidances that a son must observe in connection with his father, especially in public. A mature son is not expected to sit beside his father in the same gathering; and if his presence is required he should play a very subordinate role, usually evidenced by the fact that he speaks as little as possible, and withdraws at the earliest possible opportunity. If it happens that the father is sitting on a bench at a funeral, for example, the son should sit on the ground; and if he has to sit on a bench, he should not sit on the same bench as his father, or on one opposite to him in order to avoid the face to face position. If the son is lying on the ground, he should sit upon seeing his father passing by; and he should never

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
" 5–9 "	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
" 10–19 "	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
" 20–29 "	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
" 30–39 "	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
" 40–49 "	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
" 50–59 "	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
" 60–69 "	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
" 70–79 "	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
" 80–89 "	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
" 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1946*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

There is another aspect of the high mortality rate of children, which is not confined to the Silwa community, but applies to the rest of the country. Infant mortality has an obvious effect on the stability of marriage relationship, as a woman that bears children who do not survive is in danger of being divorced by her husband, for she is considered the same as one who cannot bear children at all. The larger the number of children surviving, the less likelihood there is of divorce.[1] Hence, the dire need to prevent such a disaster by women who resort to many devices for pregnancy or warding off the evil eye, some of which were described earlier. Official statistics clearly show the relation between divorce and the number of children born or surviving; the latter case is shown in the following table. 58%

TABLE III

The relation between divorce and the number of surviving children in percentages[2]

No. of Children	*Divorces*				
	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
None	74·7	76·0	77·0	76·8	77·8
One child	16·3	15·78	15·3	15·3	15·0
Two children	5·08	4·78	4·52	4·54	4·2
Three "	2·18	2·10	1·95	1·90	1·77
Four "	0·985	0·907	0·754	0·712	0·778
Five "	0·398	0·395	0·316	0·348	0·332
More than five children	0·318	0·222	0·245	0·186	0·205

This high mortality rate for this age group is partly due to the onset of various child diseases such as measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, diphtheria, as well as endemic diseases such as dysentery. As mentioned earlier, the sickness of children at this stage is acknowledged by the villagers themselves and sometimes attributed to acute states of jealousy from siblings, or to the exposure of the delicate child to the evil eye.[3] 164

On the whole, the family treatment of the infant is relatively more protective and more attentive compared with the later period of childhood. Nursing children usually fare better than their older siblings in health and appearance. The protective attitude towards nurslings and toddlers could 855 854

[1] M. Hassanain, 'Infant Mortality in Egypt', Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished), London, 1940, p. 228.

[2] Worked out from the *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 31.

[3] According to *Vital Statistics* in Egypt, diseases responsible for infant mortality according to their death poll are infectious diseases, respiratory system diseases, diarrhoea and congenital diseases.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
854 achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the
[196] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that
195 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

857 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over,
[866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant
859 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters
593 or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

2: Blackman E-§ (1920-1926) 1927
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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in 743
England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are 758
supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is 177
lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as 164
we have in England there is a crying need.

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance 181
in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is
low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise
it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and 562
this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, 521
before whom they discuss the most private matters without the 831
slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years
hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most [855]
revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in [577]
such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and
women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in
my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this re-
spect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives
with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position
to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who
are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the
most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way
as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage 581
is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the 562
desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. 292
It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the 858
jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock de-
corated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn
coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or
outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man.
In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard
it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the
latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian 582
Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages 656
which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbid- 183
ding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen.
However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been dis-
obeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False 692
ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up 582
the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he 577

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex. 842

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint. 855

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous. 586 842 152

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets. 789 842

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Each leaf should be rolled up separately, tied up with string, and hung round the child's neck. It is believed that as soon as the leaves dry the child's coughing will stop. 755

This prescription, given as a cure for a cough, is, so I was told by the sheikh who prescribed it, very old. Some seeds of the cotton-plant which have been dried over the fire are pounded up into a powder. The patient should take some of this dry, early in the morning and also at night. 757 278

There are a number of cures for various diseases which are well known to the people themselves, so that it is not always necessary to call in the aid of the 'doctor.' Among the large number which I have collected are the following.

Cure for a cough. A bunch of camel's hair is placed on the chest of the patient, and another bunch on the top of the head, the hair being first steeped in oil. Both bunches are kept in position by large handkerchiefs bound round the body and over the head. This is believed to make the patient perspire, after which the cough goes. This cure is used for children only.

FIG. 125. CHARM TO CURE A CHILD'S COUGH

755 [789] [855] 753 757 278

A man who lives in a small Upper Egyptian village began, two or three years ago, to suffer from rheumatism in his legs. He got worse and worse, until he was so crippled that he was unable to walk. He consulted several doctors, so I was told, but they could do him no good. One day, when some of his friends came to see him, he told them how useless was all the medical treatment he had received. They therefore persuaded him to try the following remedy. Having made several cuts in both legs, he took some garlic and squeezed the juice of it over the cuts, rubbing it well in. The pain was awful, and the man wept from the agony. However, he persisted in the treatment every day for a fortnight. Each day a lot of pus came away—"yellow water" it was called when I was told about this remedy—and each day he got better, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIII

THE EVIL EYE AND OTHER SUPERSTITIONS

855 515 IN the preceding chapter I referred to the neglected condition of the children, partly due to the women's utter ignorance of hygiene and also to the fact that facilities for keeping themselves and their children clean are practically non-existent in Egyptian villages. My readers must bear in mind that all the water, for [312] whatever purpose it may be required, has to be fetched by the women from the Nile, or a canal, or even some dirty pool, all of which may be situated at some distance from their homes. But 754 515 the main reason for the children being so dirty is the belief in, and dread of, the evil eye, or eye of envy, which is to be found practi- 855 cally all over the world. It has not even died out in modern England, where, to my own knowledge, it exists in parts of the eastern [171] counties, and it may possibly exist in other counties also. To the Egyptian peasants the fear of the evil eye is a very real terror from infancy to old age, and on that account it is considered unwise to let a child look too beautiful in case some one may cast the eye of envy over it. Certainly the dirt allowed to accumulate on some of these poor little specimens of humanity should afford a very effective protection against any and every evil eye!

754 To counteract this baneful influence innumerable methods are 753 adopted, of which I will give a few examples.

755 If after a woman has received a visit from friends and neighbours her child shows signs of illness she immediately thinks that one of her guests has cast the evil eye on it. She accordingly cuts out a human figure in paper (Fig. 132), and then takes a pin, repeats the name of each of her late visitors in turn, pricking the paper figure at the mention of each name. When she has repeated all the names she sets the figure on fire, saying to her child, "Look at it, look at it!" When it is consumed, she takes a piece of alum, rubs it on the child's forehead, and then places it in a fire, over which she passes the child seven times. When the alum is burnt out, leaving only a charred substance, the mother takes it out of

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the fire and stamps on it. After this, it is believed, the injury done to the child by means of the evil eye has been effectually counteracted, and it will get well again. 754 753 755

Another means of averting the evil eye is to throw dust after a person who is suspected of having cast a baleful glance as he or she went by in the street or on the road. Or, again, a piece of the outer garment of the suspected person is secretly cut off with a sharp knife and is put in a pottery saucer containing burning incense. This is waved in front of the person affected, so that the smoke may pass over him and counteract the malign influence. Another method is to break a piece of pottery behind the back of the person who is believed to possess the evil eye. 754 755

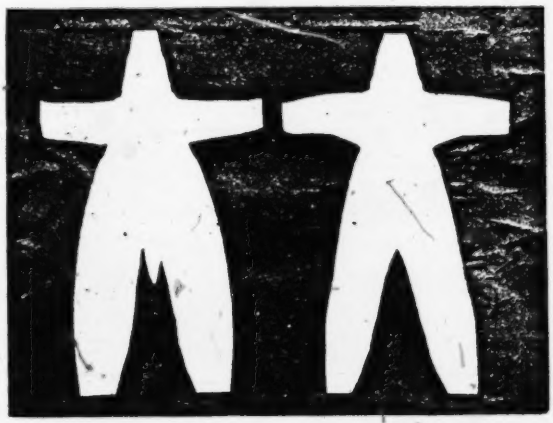

FIG. 132. PAPER FIGURES REPRESENTING A MAN (LEFT) AND A WOMAN (RIGHT), TO BE PRICKED WITH PINS AND THEN BURNT IN ORDER TO CURE A CHILD OF THE ILL EFFECTS OF THE EVIL EYE

Similar precautions are taken when animals are thought to have had the eye of envy cast upon them. 754 831

When I was residing in a small village in Middle Egypt the buffalo which produced my daily supplies of milk refused on more than one occasion to yield the necessary quantity for my morning meal. Its owners were convinced that this was due to the evil eye, so they put some fire in a pottery saucer, together with incense, and passed this seven times over the buffalo's head. Immediately after this the milk flowed, convincing them that they were right in their suspicion! 755

If a woman has a good-looking child, and visitors come to her house, she is careful to note if the child cries when they depart. If it does she then knows for certain that one or more of them has 754 755 855

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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754 cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many
755 small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by
855 one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

754 Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is
755 constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water
[576] being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's posses-
[576] sions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Salla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

114 The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or
754 three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close
755 contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the
753 colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XXIV

THE CHANGELING (MABŪL)

906 855 69 753

SOME people say that a child is sometimes a changeling, that is, that the Jinn have substituted it for another, and for this they have two "remedies." In the Buḥaira Province, and its neighbourhood, they put the child, about sunset, inside an oven which has no fire underneath, and close the door tightly, and leave it there until the morning. When they abandon it they say, "God is between us and you; give *us our* son and take *your own.*"

But in Gīza and Benī Suēf, and the surrounding districts, in place of the oven they choose an abandoned tomb, in which no dead person has been buried during a year at least.

These are the two savage methods followed. Often the child dies for want of breath inside the oven, or the tomb; or else some dangerous accident may lead to its destruction.

XXV

[p. 51] "THE FATHER OF FEATHERS" (ABŪ RĪSH)

"Oh, Father of Feathers, please God, you will live."
(*Yā Abū rīsh in shāllāh ta'īsh*).

849 751

IF a woman have one child only, and whenever she has another boy or girl it dies, she immediately invokes the aid of an "old wife," one of the sorceresses, who bids her dress the child, who she fears will die, in a great peaked cap,[1] decorated with feathers from a goose or common hen or turkey, and to gird it with a black shawl, and thereafter set it on a black she-ass, with its back to the front. Then the boys and girls of the village, or city,[2] gather round him, and call out with one voice, "*Oh, Father of feathers, please God, you will live!*" They go round the village in this way three times, or even four to make quite sure.

[1] [*Ṭarṭūr*, like a dunce's cap.]
[2] [I have seen such a procession in Cairo near the Citadel. Tr.]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of 582
gossip and warning against such mixture.

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child 853
does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth.

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. 856
The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting.

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of 862
premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food.

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed [821]
to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, [842]
and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circum- [304]
cision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to [821]
infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive.

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth 854
and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk 863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, the girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

• 856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an [827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia [757] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age 852 of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

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days is the piercing of the ridge of the ears 'while they are still soft'. The 852
girl would have three holes in each ear, two at the top and one in the lobe, 304
while the boy would have only two holes in the right ear, one at the top and one in the lobe. A thread is inserted into each hole so that the hole is not closed during the healing period. Immediately the punctures are
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At the end of the second year, or normally after they are weaned, both 852
boys and girls have their first haircut (for the girls it is actually the first and last). This is accompanied, in the case of a boy, by a dish of boiled maize called 'karama', to be eaten by whoever attends, usually small boys and poor people. The boy's head is left normally with three tufts of hair, [302]
one in the middle, and one on each side, the rest being shaved off by a razor. The girl is left with a large tuft on the top of the head, while the sides are shaved all round.

The care and handling of the infant are of great significance for this 854
enquiry. Whenever the child is on his mother's lap, or astride her hip, or sitting or crawling beside her, he is always fussed over. Mother or visitors try to win a smile from the baby by tickling or caressing him, by turning his face outwards and then inwards and so on, or in the case of a boy by playing with his genitals. On other occasions they talk to the baby or make noises to attract his attention. A very common way of playing with the child is to support him under his arms, throw him upwards and then catch him, and this is repeated while singing to the child or talking to him.

The time of changing clothes or bathing the baby occasions the greatest amount of bodily stimulation, where not only the mother but perhaps the other children pass their hands over the child's body, calling him 'O thou fish; thy body is as smooth as the fish'. Moreover the amount of kissing on the mouth or on the cheeks that the infant experiences far exceeds any conjectures from the European point of view. Mothers have no objection to visitors kissing their children; on the contrary, it is supposed to be one of the means of 'feeling at home' to kiss the young children, or a good gesture of friendship.

As to the other features of development, such as walking and talking, 856 ●
the writer has found no significant differences between what he has seen in Silwa, and what he knows about the general stages of children's growth elsewhere. Here there is great variety; where some children can walk at the end of the first year, others walk a few months later; while some talk during the second year, others talk only during the third year.

The teaching of the child to walk and talk is not usually a matter for [857]
adults as much as for the older children, who usually take their siblings outside when they play. The adults do not take as active a part in teaching their children as do their older brothers or sisters.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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856 their children as do their older brothers or sisters. They hardly teach or help the child in its attempts to walk; for instance, if a child trying to walk falls down, the mother is not supposed to show much anxiety for her child's discomfiture; she simply has to say: 'You will grow up and have [188] more of it', but only after spitting on the ground to ward off the effect of [195] the evil spirits. There is no baby talk, and when the child starts to babble, grown-ups usually tease him by examining his capacity to repeat difficult words, but no deliberate teaching takes place.

854 As to the sleeping posture of infants, there is hardly any stylized way, as the infant is left to sleep on his mother's lap, on another person's lap, or on the ground, without any scheduling or worry about its sleeping hours. Mothers are seen carrying their sleeping infants, either vertically or horizontally, on going from one place to another. On the whole, the sleeping habits of children in Silwa are very similar to those of other peasant societies, where they learn to sleep anywhere and through anything.[1] 513 Older children and adults can be seen asleep outside the house during the day or the night in seemingly uncomfortable positions or places.

[1] Margaret Mead, 'The Primitive Child', in Murchison, *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Worcester, Mass., 1931, p. 677.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

852 attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag
382 containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the
789 baskets (Fig. 37).

[465] The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

789 Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often
241 given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

789

[463]
[291]
[285]

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

789
852

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *koḥl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

[856]

553 The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony.
852 If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name
787 for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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one a piece of land, and to the less favoured a large piece of gold. As the first son complained about his inheritance, his dying father told him that every grain of earth he had left for him was mixed with a grain of gold, and that if he dug well enough he would be able to extract the gold from it. After a lapse of some time the less favoured one squandered his gold, while the other, by 'digging' harder and harder, added to the fertility of his land and thus prospered and was worthy of his father's love. For this reason, the latter was taken as an ideal symbol of filial piety.

As mentioned previously, to have origin in the village is also to have land, and this is reflected in the scheme of the village land. The cultivable land was divided between the descendants of 'On and Musa, the two brothers, who were the heads of the village sections.[1] It is maintained that every ten kasabas (land-measure) of land owned by 'On clansmen is followed by another ten kasabas owned by Musa clansmen. 'If you have no sahm or kirat (land-measure) handed over to you from your ancestors, then you are not a full member of your clan,' Ali stated, 'and two families had to migrate from the village to another village because they had to sell their land. It is the worst lot that can befall any person. It brings disgrace to him to abandon his father's trust, and it also means that he is sinning against his children. There are few people still in the village who have sold their land, and they are like those who have shed their clothes and remained stark naked; both are the two great shame-bringing practices.'

Yet those who are under considerable economic pressure resort to the device of 'land-pawn' which entails the owner's handing over of his land to a man in return for a comparatively large sum of money. The latter tills the land as if it was his possession, to be returned to its original owner on his payment of the debt. Another way of relieving economic distress without actually selling the land is the so-called 'conditional sale', whereupon the owner sells with option to repurchase at a given date.

If selling land is one of the worst social practices, the acquisition of land is naturally the best one. To be able to add to one's inheritance is a sign of parents' approval and content with their son's deeds as well as God's blessing. It is interesting to find children about the age of five or six singing a rhyme, telling how a chicken given to a child by his mother has enabled him in the long run to acquire a 'kirat'—one twenty-fourth of a feddan. The rhyme goes on to say, 'My mother gave me a chicken, the chicken bought me a goose, the goose bought me a small goat, the goat bought me a sheep, the sheep bought me a small donkey, the donkey bought me a cow and the cow bought me a kirat'. There is another version of the same song, differing in what the cow bought for the child, and in the other version he got a 'bride' and the bride got him a 'bridegroom—a son'.[2]

From the point of view of land tenure, the village is a typical example of

[1] See Chapter II for social structure.
[2] The rhyme is occasionally associated with bouncing the ball on the wall.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes.

[202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being

[312] less embarrassed, less inquisitive, and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

In the absence of older sisters

[372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

Towards the end of this period he

[241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

[868] On the whole for him this is a stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [31] [48]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [261]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [24]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [8] [312]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [480]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing.

Wool spinning and yarning. [515]

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [265]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. Separately every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, where his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [562] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 26 [46] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

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1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over, and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers.

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy.

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'.

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike.

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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861 Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to [55] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten [82] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

● 857 Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before [866] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

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as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

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them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

577 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games [859] when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension. Fear, moreover, is an efficient lever for the maintenance of social cohesion in the pattern of father-son relationship, and hence it is not surprising to find the common saying that 'fear is a blissful thing' (al khof baraka). 577 [156]

The popular sayings connected with the administering of punishment are also varied and inconsistent, perhaps to maintain a balance and to avoid excess. On the one hand one hears phrases such as 'If you don't beat the child, nothing good would come out of him', 'The stick is for the disobedient', 'Those who do not feel, the stick would make them feel'. On the other hand, there are other sayings such as 'The stick makes the boy dumb'. 'The threat would have no effect on those who do not obey spontaneously', It is considered, however, that childhood is the most appropriate period for punishing and disciplining the child. It is said that the child during this time is like the maize plant in its second irrigation (this irrigation is considered to be important for the plant's growth and is preceded by the pulling out of the grass and other weeds). The concentration of punishment at this period is justified on the grounds that the boy or the girl at this stage is neither too young nor too old to learn. The only form of corporal punishment administered to adolescents on some rare occasions is slapping. 861

However, the administering of punishment by parents to children is checked from being unduly excessive by other relatives, neighbours or other adults who happen to be present. Mediation (literally separation—'hajazat') as institutionalized in the 'Arab council' is an important force in the legal and social functioning of the community.[1] It is practised by children themselves and even mock fights are sometimes played by them to enjoy the wranglings of conciliation similar to those amongst the adults. Some children told me that on seeing their parents quarrelling, they immediately go out of the house to invite one of their close relatives for mediation. Adults are also expected to stop children's fights if they happen to be passing by, and even punish the disputants.[2] [857] [578]

It is appropriate here to evaluate the period of childhood in Silwa, in comparison with their period of infancy. With the exception of observing sex and religious norms, childhood in Silwa is the period through which a boy or a girl experiences a great number of the pressures of socialization. Some modern anthropologists have pointed out the importance of discontinuities or inconsistencies in child-rearing practices as relevant cultural data especially in connection with personality organization.[3] Esther Goldfrank, for instance, postulates four categories of societies with regard to

[1] See Chapter II. [2] See Appendix X, 'Story Completion'.
[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning', in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. by Kluckhohn and Murray, p. 414.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

882 With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the [826] house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

883 Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

882 Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends. 885 Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually 581 increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unham- 888 pered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for [291] instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse them- 857 selves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

882 [1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

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[For a description and analysis of children's play and games; and an analysis of children's tales see category 116, pp. 144-182.]

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251 343 larger granaries, which stood on the ground. They, again, were made of sun-baked clay. Many of these must have been from seven to eight or ten feet high.

339 Brick-making is also an important industry. The clay is mixed with chopped straw, and is prepared and kneaded as for pottery-making (see above, pp. 135, 151). So far as I know, men only are employed in this work. The bricks are shaped in a wooden mould with a handle, and are left on the ground to sun-bake (Fig. 81). Most of the houses of the *fellāḥīn*, and even some of the better-class residences, are built with these crude bricks, though the owners of the latter type of house more usually prefer to use fire-baked bricks.

[462]

348 339

FIG. 81. BRICKS LEFT TO SUN-BAKE: WOODEN MOULD WITH HANDLE IN FOREGROUND

When the walls are being built each bricklayer is assisted by a fellow-workman, who stands below and throws up to him one brick at a time (Fig. 82). I have often watched walls being built in this way, and I do not remember ever seeing a bricklayer miss a catch!

372 857 I have referred more than once in preceding chapters to fuel manufactured out of cow- or buffalo-dung. This dung is made into round, flat cakes by the women and young girls. Very young children are often to be seen in the villages, their hands and arms plastered with dung, busily engaged in making these cakes, which

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are left on the ground to dry and harden in the sun. Every housewife is careful to see that she has always a plentiful supply of this fuel, which is neatly stacked in large quantities on the roofs of the houses. 372 857

Basket-making is a very large and important industry. Certain kinds of baskets are made in almost every village throughout the country, but a few types are characteristic of certain localities only. Many of the commoner kinds of baskets are strong and well made, but the finest work is to be found in the more southern provinces; indeed, the farther south one goes the better the workmanship. Baskets are made by both men and women, though I have found that in some localities this work tends to be monopolized by one of the sexes only; and one type of basket at least, so I was told, is made only by men. Baskets are constructed mostly out of date-palm leaves and the mid-ribs of palm-branches, but one variety in the south is made from the leaves of *dōm*-palms. These particular baskets are easily to be recognized by the shiny surface of the material employed in their manufacture. 285 [340] [291] [331] [462]

FIG. 82. BUILDING A WALL

The commonest and one of the most useful baskets in general use is called the *maḳṭaf* (Fig. 83). It is used in field-work, for the [480]

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clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

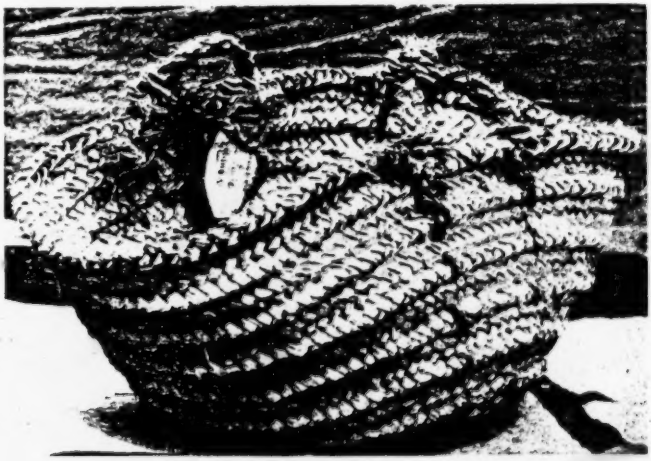

FIG. 83. A MAKṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

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286 confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

[283] [291] [142] [516] [857]

FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

241 312 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth downward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 476] A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20, according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is [887 857] left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious watering raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

and hygienic. There is no woman who does not use this 302
inexpensive cosmetic, both for herself and for her children.
On a holiday or when she is tired, she neatly applies it with a
kind of stylet dipped into the phial of black.

Circumcision is a therapeutic, tattooing a scarification, 304
henna a poultice, *kohl* an eye-salve; for these aesthetic 302
devices also serve the fellaheen as preventives or remedies. 278
At the same time they also represent magical rites: circum- 777
cision is an act of consecration, tattooing has a symbolic
value, henna is a commemorative, *kohl* keeps off the evil
eye. Thus a luxury is never devoid of meaning or utility.

The fellaheen do not bathe for pleasure or for clean- 515
liness. They have enough contact with water at their work,
or in their Moslem ritual ablutions ([28]). Every evening these
ablutions of hands, feet, face and private parts assure, at
least to the men, a minimum of cleanliness. The children
splash about naked as soon as they can, or whenever the [857]
beasts have to be watered. The women go into the water
dressed and in groups, to wash their dirty clothes and them-
selves at the same time. For this they use clay or a piece [296]
of wood, and occasionally soap. In many villages the women
never have a thorough wash, except on the occasion of their
marriage, and once a year at the Great Bairam.

The dress of the fellaheen constitutes the distinguishing 291
mark of Egypt. While many everyday actions and customs
are common to the peasantry of all countries, or at least
to all those who are poor, or live in Moslem lands, the fellah
differs from them all in his manner of dress, which is
immediately recognisable. Yet there is nothing picturesque
or fanciful about it, no complication or embroidery such
as distinguishes the village dress of Syria and Palestine.

The men wear on their heads the simplest form of covering,
a mere skull-cap, which gives no protection against the sun.
This brownish felt cap or *libda* is so distinctive of the poor
fellah that its very name has furnished him with a title.
He is often called *abu libda*, the fellow with a cap, figuring
in many a popular tale. Sometimes, and in the case of boys
almost always, the cap is made of white calico (*taqiya*). On
special occasions, if the fellah is better off or more pious,
particularly in the south, he will wind round his cap a long
white cloth which serves to protect his neck. This is due to
Moslem influence. A good *libda* is deep, and should come

843 avoids looking at any dead person, and gazes on portraits of handsome men, perhaps magazine cuttings that she has pinned on the wall. She must be able to eat what she likes. If she is thwarted, the child will be seriously affected.

846 Immediately after birth the baby is put in a basket,
783 which serves as a cradle, and is not washed for seven days.
[852] The first bath has a ritual significance of purification. It is given by the midwife, and the water is poured from a pot (*abrîq*) specially kept for this purpose, with different ornamentation for a girl and for a boy. The mother is technically impure for thirty or forty days after, according as the child is a girl or a boy. These Moslem customs are also found in Morocco.

844 If at the moment of birth the father is working in the
[431] fields, and the child is a son, a friend will run and tell him the good news, for which he can claim a gift. This tradition recalls a text in Jeremiah: 'Cursed be the man who took the tidings to my father, saying to him "A son is born", and who filled him with joy'. (Ch. XX, v.15).

777 As soon as the child is born, a blue bead is hung round
751 his neck to turn away the evil eye. For the same reason the boy of whom his parents are so proud may be dressed like a girl, till he is weaned. His mother will give him suck for two years at least, at far too frequent intervals, thus
853 causing gastric troubles. This is the length of time favoured
842 by the ancient Egyptians, by the black peoples of Africa,
586 and by Koranic precept: "Divorced mothers shall give suck to their children for two full years" (Sura II, 233). The peasant women think that by weaning late they will delay another pregnancy.

854 When the time comes for her to go out — and this hap-
482 pens very soon — she carries the infant astride her shoulder, which does not prevent her from carrying a pot full of water on her head. While she is working in the fields she puts her baby on the ground, near the path which threads the crops, in the shadow of the maize. The baby does not always have something to lie on, but rolls in the furrow, puts earth in its mouth, screams, sleeps and gets used to it all. If it cries
853 too loud, any passing mother will give it her breast.

854 The child stays at home until his fifth year. He soon gets used to the company of the animals there. Before
857 long he is capable of looking after them and can take the

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
siga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

871 794 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 562 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to [482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them. 857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by [372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 857 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often, up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight [464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 593 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neglected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put [736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or 861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to 871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

ness ; but these defects are due to his servitude and isolation. 181 [183] In the words of El-Kolâly, his mind is walled-in between ignorance and tyranny. (")

Moreover the soil and the care of the soil make the fellah patient, long-suffering and hard. The soil has imprinted on him something of its own earthiness. His very love is entirely physical, and yet he is not immoral.

He is taught from childhood that he comes from his 521 mother's womb. His bad language when he is angry shows 831 how much he knows of sexual matters. Even girls playing [524 with dolls enact scenes of perfect realism. But this calm 857] animal shamelessness has nothing in common with obscenity. Fundamental morality is not affected by it. The fact that everybody is watching everybody else, together with the conservative temperament and instinctive modesty of the fellaheen, makes offences against morals fewer than elsewhere. [684] As El-Kolâly says, 'Among the fellaheen offences against morality represent only a small proportion of the total'.

Poverty and tradition inure the fellah from his early days 735 to the lack of all bodily ease. A comfortable bed, a pleasant 183 home life, a good table, light company — these are things 771 beyond his grasp. Their absence safeguards his morality. So do the precepts of Islam, it might be added ; but the fellaheen are very ignorant of their religion, and the Sheikhs and Ulema do little to teach them. It is more probable that among these primitive people natural morality keeps its original force.

The fellaheen are moral because they believe in God. 183 They are material, but not materialistic. They believe 771 wholeheartedly in the intervention and providence of God. 812 It is always "*In sha Allah*" — if it is God's will. They make 437 no plan, undertake nothing without adding "*In sha Allah*".

A Greek merchant says to a fellah, "You'll bring me your cotton, then, tomorrow ?"

"Yes, *ya khawâga*, (") *in sha Allah*."

"Five cantars, not less. You understand ?"

"Yes, *in sha Allah*."

"You'll be able to find the camels for them ?"

"*In sha Allah*."

"I must have the goods before midday."

21. The GAFFAF is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

113
[464
857]

and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651]

27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

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136]

28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465]

29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249]

31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426
735]

33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302]

38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

22.

Swing-Song.

539x
527
857

This song is said to be sung by girls, as they swing at the "great feast". They are teasing friends who are standing near.

The "great feast" (ʿId el-kebîr) also designated by the Turkish name Korbân Beirâm, is celebrated about two months and a half after the more important "little feast", which ends the holy fast-month Ramaḍân. At the time of the "great feast", even the poorest must have a piece of meat, for it is celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice. [796]

Like all feasts, the "great feast" is celebrated with much noise and merriment. Swings are rarely lacking at the place of the feast.

Ya ḫāi, rīḥet hudūmak
zēi kaḥk el-ʿīd,
maʿgūm-bi-šēbe u-kafūra
u-samnē gedīd.

Brother, the odor of thy garments
Is like feast-cakes,
Kneaded with wormwood and camphor
And fresh fat.

3. Such strange spices as wormwood and camphor are actually baked in these sweet feast-cakes, which are general favorites (compare No. 20. l. 9). Camphor is put, for instance, into coffee. [263]

[P 24 is blank]

×539 If thou couldst see the rings,
[301] As they sparkle in my ear,
Thou mightest carry the basket,
10 Without being open to blame!

1. As marriage between cousins is regarded as the most
[582] natural thing (compare No. 87), hence ibnê 'ammi = "cousin"
[605] (masc.) and bintê 'ammi = "cousin" (fem.) are quite common expressions for "dearest". Married couples often speak thus of one another, even though they may not be related.

4. Compare No. 110, l. 6.

[186] 5. The Jews are the most despised of all unbelievers and even more hated than the Christians.

7. They are not plainly visible until the veil is removed.

9. "Thou mightest carry the basket", namely: of debris
[461] from the excavations, which work belongs to the boys. At
[857] our work, it was always fun for the boys, when one of the
[681] men, as a punishment, was obliged to take a basket and carry debris in it. Then scornful and contemptuous remarks were rained upon him.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

182 [342] and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very 183 291 important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same [622] type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of [554] furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

858 464 With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

423 It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign [656] of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

due to the fact that there is no formal ceremony for the naming in Artas, as in Silwa, and hence the change is easier. 553

Since the enforcement of registration of births about forty years ago, the child is registered after the ceremony. It is to be remembered that still-births are not registered, and are never buried in the cemetery, but always below the threshold of the house. 656 845

The mother takes no active part in all the ceremony activities, as she is not allowed to move from her room of confinement until forty days have elapsed. As mentioned earlier, the child is considered to be guarded throughout this period by the angels, who talk to him, entertain him, and sometimes tease or even annoy him. This is the explanation of the baby's occasional smiles, as well as cries. He smiles because the angels have told him that his father is alive, and cries when they inform him that his father has died. 846 [176] [807]

By the end of the forty days, the mother finishes her period of confinement and is considered to be in full control of the baby. She can move about with him and resume her ordinary domestic tasks as she becomes ceremonially clean after having her first bath, a kind of ritual cleansing. [183]

The end of this confinement means the gradual introduction of the child to the wider family circles by taking it on visits to relatives or their visiting the house with presents. If the mother takes the child to any house, the child is never expected to leave empty-handed. Whether near or distant relatives, or of no blood connection at all, they always give the child presents varying from salt, dates, a loaf of bread, an egg, to money and more valuable things. On the birth of the first child the paternal grandfather cannot see his grandson without sending a ram or a goat before his arrival. 846 851 43

Another step is the introduction of the newly-born boy to the other boys in the neighbourhood. For this purpose the mother prepares a dish of boiled maize or wheat and sugar, called 'balila', and taking her child, accompanied by the children of the neighbourhood, repairs to some elevated land to eat the food. For this occasion the mother dresses in new scented clothes. For the first time also, the child wears new clothes, consisting of a white undergarment covered by a striped one, thus discarding his mother's or father's old wrappings. 851 846 858

It is socially encouraged that both a woman and a man should give rein to their intense desire for children. The main function of marriage is to have children and thus perpetuate family life. This shows itself in one of the condolatory phrases addressed to any offspring on the occasion of their father's death: 'He who has left successors is not dead.' My informant, Ali, said, 'A childless couple will have no "successors" to read the "Fatiha" for their souls after their death and their name will thus end by their departure from this world. Children are really useful, not only in this world but in the world hereafter. The Prophet (on whom be the peace and blessings of God) said, "Get married and multiply, as I shall take 847 [183] [581]

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858 pride in the number of my followers in comparison with those of other
842 nations". If sons and daughters behave uprightly they will act as a means
[783] of redeeming the parents' sin. Any good action by the child, e.g. giving alms, helping the weak, digging a well, would also benefit the parents. Parents who have left unworthy children have left "dust" behind.'

My informant went on to say: 'Children are the glory of this world, as
858 the Koran says "Money and children are the joy of this life". Another
779 statement of the Koran says: "God give us a good thing in this world and a good thing in the next world". The Koran interpreters consider that, in this context, "the good thing of this world" implies children. Children are also referred to as sowing seeds, as it is through these seeds that the corn reproduces itself.'

593 As for the wife, she attains her proper status only as a mother, and a
554 childless woman is in an insecure position, as her husband is socially
[595] justified in remarrying, to have children. For a newly-married couple to have a child is a step towards partaking of some individuality in the larger family circle. The wife is referred to as 'mother of the children' and whenever a man is asked about his wife, she is frequently referred to also as the 'mother of the first-born boy' and the same applies also to the father, and this reference is more common in public gatherings.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that there were ten childless women
842 in the village and that they were therefore known by everybody. Out of these ten, two were living with husbands who had taken a second wife. He continued, 'A childless woman is usually like a she-camel who does not conceive, puts on more and more flesh, and gets younger every day—but not fruitful, as she can never "lengthen" her husband's neck amongst the menfolk. She is a sore eye to her family. The proper woman is the one who
[156] is an "envelope for conception".' It is not strange, then, that a fat woman
[826] is a desirable ideal, as she has more room to bear the child, lactates abundantly and gives more warmth to her children.

It is appropriate here to discuss the differential value of boys and girls
858 in Silwa. The importance of the boys' work in the fields as a major con-
593 tribution to the family's means of subsistence was discussed earlier. More-
562 over, the boys are considered to be the best capital investment for ageing parents. They are expected to form the basis for social and economic
[736] security, not only for their parents, but also for any widowed sisters. This
[730] duty to support their parents or those female relatives who have no other man to support them is legally enforced by the religious courts. This question gives rise to endless disputes; one hears of parents suing their children for support according to their means, or at least threatening to sue them. No such obligations devolve on the daughters, as they are wives of their husbands, and no claim can be made against them.

554 Boys are also an added qualification for social prestige. A man with
562 more sons backing him up can always speak with more authority and ranks high in the community's esteem even if he owns less land. Fathers who have

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being precocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 130–1.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings. 865 858

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1] 865 593 152 [151]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents. 865 593 152 755 [154] [154]

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 857 593

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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Chapter Six

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

In this chapter it is intended to outline the procedures and methods that are adopted in this community to inculcate the norms that transform the child, who is relatively peripheral, into the adult who is the central link in village social life. The transition can be considered, as Fortes puts it, as one 'from an economically passive burden into a producer, from a biological unit into a social personality, irretrievably cast in the habits, disposition, and notions characteristic of his culture'.[1] Fortes has also provided the writer with certain insight in evaluating the learning process as a by-product of the cultural routine, a phenomenon which obtains in the village community. It is obvious that in Silwa the education of children is not surrounded, as in some primitive societies, with ceremonies of initiation, elaborate ritual, or narration of totemic myths. Learning accrues mainly through children's observing, imitating and assisting their adults in their everyday activities. For the villagers express the educational process through emphasizing life and time as the most important educational agencies which mould and influence the character, and provide the experience. The difference between an adult and a child is, on the whole, quantitative rather than qualitative. The former knows and thus conforms to the cultural norms, while the latter does not. The commonly used word is not the classical word 'tifl' (infant) but another word which is also classical but literally means 'ignorant' (jahil)—and thus identifies ignorance with childhood. It is because of this ignorance of expected skills, norms and attitudes that the children are considered inferior to the adult, and the younger as subservient to the elder.

Here socialization is to include its two aspects of technical training and cultural or regulatory training.[2] In Chapter I it was shown how a boy or a girl is progressively introduced to the economic pursuits of adults, and what skills were expected of them at successive stages of their growth. It was also emphasized how the child was expected to take over from his

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 6.
[2] See Introduction.

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father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

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and this contributes in no small way to the satisfaction of the individual's psychological need for social recognition.[1] These are some of the forces the writer regards as maintaining some sort of healthy effect in the growing up of children in Silwa; otherwise the strain of childhood would have been unbearable in a predominantly authoritarian community where the child is regarded as its father's possession. Erich Fromm would consider such a community as thwarting the child's legitimate strivings for freedom, independence, and self-fulfilment. He maintains that the social arrangement of an authoritarian patriarchal society, frustrating man's wishes to self-realization, tends to create in him a destructive passion, which in turn must be suppressed by external or internal force.[2]

If one thinks of the disciplinary policies of childhood in terms of a straight line, at one end of which is the easy-going discipline of some primitive societies, and at the other end the harsh discipline of a society like the Japanese, it is apparent that the type of discipline to be found in Silwa is closer to that of the Japanese society than to that of those primitive societies.

The period of childhood is considered by the adult as an unimportant stage which should be quickly passed over. The writer seldom noticed grown-ups talking about their childhood, and his informants found it very difficult, even unbecoming, to recall their childhood days. The villagers' attitude towards children is indeed a mixed one, regarding them both as supernumerary entities as well as a sub-adult. A child is an economic asset as well as a social nuisance. It was shown in Chapter I how the child is continuously expected to take over from the adult the tasks which it is capable of performing as a part of its acquisition of discipline—'adab'. On the level of social action, however, it is supposed to be insignificant and to have no opinion of its own. On the whole, a son or a daughter, whether young or old, cannot replace the parent in performing formal social obligations; for example, taking gifts to circumcision and wedding ceremonies or entertaining a guest, unless there are extenuating circumstances which justify it. The child's world is always connected with the female world rather than the grown-up male world. In the ceremonial celebrations, children are usually mixed with women more than with men. If children happened to be in a male gathering, they must keep to their place, and be able to withdraw at the earliest opportunity to play on their own, or to join the female crowd. At this level of social action, the unity of the social sphere between children and grown-ups tends to break. Although the child's life is directed towards aims, responsibilities, and values similar

[1] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, pp. 47–8. See also Abram Kardiner in *The Individual and His Society*, where he emphasizes the emotional meaning of work: 'There is, first, the intrinsic gratification in work as a form of mastery. This must be credited with being a basic gratification. The satisfactions derived from it are common to all forms of mastery. They give the individual a feeling of effectiveness and control' (p. 50).

[2] Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, pp. 133–8.

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858 to those of the adults, he is debarred from adult circles, and adult activities; and grown-ups do not expect their children to express any opinion on matters which are outside their domain. Although they are expected to orientate themselves to the same sphere of life, children are not given any significant role in the social life of the village, apart from their economic role. Until the age of twelve the children are not expected to go to the mosque to say their prayers, and if they go they are allowed to [199] sit in the back row only, and never in the front or the middle. Women and girls, however, do not go to the mosque at all in Silwa, and are not expected to do so. There is no religious sanction for this, however; Islam has enjoined mosque prayers on both sexes. Compared with the Tale child, the social sphere of the Silwa child is more restricted in many respects. In the former society, the social sphere of adults and children is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. 'Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children, or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system.'[1] In Silwa, however, although children may know about the happenings and events of the adult world in the social sphere, they are not expected to take an active part, or to show interest in them, unless they are asked to do so. On some occasions the writer heard children who, on enquiring about the guests coming to the house, or the nature of the gifts taken to relatives, or where father was going, were silenced and asked to 'mind their own business'.

858 Moreover, the process of 'growing-up' is believed to be affected by the character traits of the parents and close relatives on both the patrilineal and matrilineal side.[2] The belief is that the virtues and vices of the parents and their family line are transmitted, through heredity, to their offspring. Especially in the case of outstanding physical features or social characteristics, their presence is invariably accounted for by inheritance from ancestors; if not directly inherited from the parents, they could be traced to the grandfather or to the great-grandfather. Trends of character, whether of meanness, hospitality, piety, wickedness, aggression or docility, seem to run in the families. A person who deviates from what is known about his family is referred to as 'a mistake' or 'a slip', whether in praise or blame depending on the context. One hears sayings and phrases to the effect that 'so-and-so by nature is good or bad'; 'his roots are rotten'; 'nature prevails over nurture (attaba yaghlib attatbu)'; 'people are of different metals; those who were good in the pre-Islamic period, will be equally good in Islam (annas maadin), Khiyaruhum fi al-Jahiliya, khiyaruhum fi al-Islam'.

861 It must be pointed out here that the process of socialization which is strongly felt during childhood and adolescence is not only conducted through the agency of the family, both conjugal and extended, but also

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 9.
[2] See Chapter IV, concerning the child's character traits.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Little girls have a perfectly free life until they reach marriageable age, when their freedom is somewhat more restricted. After marriage they are still more secluded, but the degree of seclusion varies, being rather stricter among the better-class peasants than among those of lower social status. Among the latter there may be considerable freedom of intercourse between the sexes. It must be remembered that there are quite definite social grades among the *fellāḥīn*, the lines of demarcation being very strongly em-

FIG. 14. A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN

phasized. For instance, in a family well known to me the women are not allowed to speak freely to the men, and, with the exception of the elderly mother, none of the females are allowed to enter a room in which male visitors may be seated, and even the mother does not appear unless there is something which renders her presence necessary. One of the women in this family is a widow of about thirty years of age, possibly a little older, and her brother objects to her even being seen walking in the streets of their village, except when she goes, accompanied by her mother, to get the water for household use or for some other necessary purpose. He told me that if he allowed her to be seen walking about in public

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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far as I know, from private individuals. It is very different in England, where the hospitals for children and adults alike are supported by voluntary contributions. It is not that charity is lacking in Egypt—far from it; but for *organized* charity such as we have in England there is a crying need. 743 758 177 164

It is not altogether surprising, considering the state of ignorance in which they exist, that the mental outlook of most of the villagers is low. As far as the women are concerned, there is nothing to raise it. Sexual matters form the chief topic of their conversation, and this has a most degrading effect both on them and on their children, before whom they discuss the most private matters without the slightest reserve. Thus the children from their very early years hear subjects spoken of and joked about in a manner that is most revolting to educated people. What chance have the children in such circumstances of growing up into pure-minded men and women? I am told (for such conversation rarely takes place in my presence) that the women are far greater offenders in this respect than the men, who usually refrain from discussing their wives with outsiders. Whether this is true or not I am not in a position to say, but at any rate the children, and especially the girls, who are more constantly with their mothers than the boys, hear the most private sexual matters openly discussed, and in such a way as to poison their minds at the very outset of their lives. Marriage is, of course, the one and only aim in life among the girls, and the desire to get a husband is encouraged in every way by the mothers. It is quite a pitiful sight to see a little girl decked out in all the jewellery she can muster, dressed in a gaily coloured frock decorated with beads and jangles (Fig. 17), and with a veil drawn coquettishly across her face, standing about the village street, or outside the house, obviously on the look-out to attract some man. In all this they are aided and abetted by their mothers, who regard it as a compliment to themselves as well as to their daughters if the latter are sought after as wives at an early age. The Egyptian Government is endeavouring to prohibit the very early marriages which have been usual in the past, and there is now a law forbidding a girl to marry till she is sixteen and a boy till he is eighteen. However, in small, out-of-the-way villages the law has been disobeyed to my certain knowledge in more than one case. False ages were, I suppose, given to the *ḳāḍi*, as the man who draws up the marriage contracts is called; and he, in view of the fee he 181 562 521 831 855 577 581 562 292 858 582 656 183 692 582 577

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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14.

Treasures.

539x

The children are not alone objects of care to their [858] parents, but are also their dearest treasures.

A little urchin speaks to his elder brother:

Ya ḫāi, ḫudni fi-gēbak,
'arnê fūl aḫḍar.
Leḥne 'izāze,
we-leḥne bēḍa nikkassar.
5 *Deḥne ḫawātim dahab*
nitḥaṭṭê fil-ḫanṣar.

O brother, put me in thy pocket,
Like a fresh bean-pod.
We are not like glass,
Nor like fragile eggs,
5 But rather, we are gold rings,
To be worn on the little finger.

1. Properly speaking, the peasant has not a pocket, but a [291] pouch on his breast, formed by belting in his garment.

2. The fresh young pods of the fūl (hog's bean) are regarded by the children as a great dainty. Compare No. 4, [262] note on l. 11.

3. A ring is about the only ornament of the fellāḥ, but [301] he is fond of having it seen.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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63.

Good Wishes.

×539 ●858 A little girl is addressed, who, according to Maḥmûd, is still so small, that she is compared with "goslings which are still green (aḫḍar)". Compare No. 64. Fortune shall so favor the little one, that she shall some day eat with a golden spoon from a silver dish.

Alla yeʿēnik, ya uzēzet Ragab;
wiṭ-ṭiśtē faḍḍa, wil-maʿāliʾ dahab.

Allah help thee, O Ragab's gosling!
[415] May thy dish be of silver, the spoons of gold!

[551] 1. According to Maḥmûd, Ragab is the name of the child's father.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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64.

Dreams of the Future.

539x
304
858

For explanation of the manner of address compare with the preceding song. Here prosperity is wished the little one, and a fine tatooing — the pride of a pretty girl — is promised her. Girls are usually tatooed at the age of five or six.

In the country almost all the women are tatooed; most frequently on the front part of the chin and on the lip, but also on the forehead, breast, backs of the hands and on the feet. The designs are pricked in with needles and blue or green coloring matter rubbed in. Compare Nos. 114 and 126.

Alla yçʿēnik, ya uzēz el-Yaman!
win ʾamet el-wizze we-ʾamet saʿdīha,
ladu" lil-wizze ʿala kaʿbīha.

Allah help thee, gosling of Yemen!
And when the goose has grown up and her fortune has grown too,
Then I will tatoo the goose upon her wrists and ankles.

1. Yemen = Arabia Felix, Araby the Blest.

2. Upon Maḥmûd's explanation of ʾamet saʿdīha I was strongly reminded of: "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men". Added to this were riches of course.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first 796
for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with [264]
all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may
be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People
appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On [292]
this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged
for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken
stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were
previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and
the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green,
and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little [858]
girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets [568]
only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant
butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes,
their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons
hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy
beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer
is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low
are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty,
equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house 574
to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very 796
imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a
happy new year, though the new year will not come for three
months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round [201]
the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, [272]
and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer [273]
made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving
another in any capacity on this day receives from his master [431]
a money present or at least a new garment. The women
also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but
this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they
have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors
for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the
question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes 796
quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the
reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, [202]
however, as the second day of the feast some persons who [943]
are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell; [769]

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analysis]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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be sitting while his father is standing. Of course, he cannot smoke in his father's presence, or do anything that might imply that he is not giving full attention to his father. 593

Amongst the children, the eldest son is favoured by his parents as he is the first to relieve his father of some of his tasks. The importance of age and sex in parents' treatment of their children shows itself, for instance, in the distribution of meat. Boys, on the whole, receive more than girls, and the older gets more than the younger. To vary this order is regarded as one of the means of reward or punishment for the children. An elder son is not expected to argue 'face to face' with his father if the latter refuses any of the former's demands. In this case he has to send a messenger to negotiate with his father. Complete identification with the father is reflected in the saying, 'Your father's enemy is your enemy and your father's friend is your friend', which is also a further evidence of the importance of family and clan solidarity. The observance of the proper rules of conduct with parents as well as with other relatives is the tangible attribute of children described as 'muaddabeen' meaning disciplined (often wrongly translated literally as 'polite'). In his role, the father has to combine discipline backed by moral sanctions.[1] [861] [577]

The relations of children to the mother are certainly warmer, intimate and more affectionate. The mother's tenderness and affection for her children should be repaid in obedience, service and respect. Ali told me that a mother's prayers for her children are the most effective appeal to God. Respect and regard for her is enjoined upon her sons and daughters by the Koran and the Prophetic tradition that says 'Paradise is at the feet of mothers'.

The relationship between brothers is expected to be one of complete solidarity. The common saying goes: 'Support your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed.' If a mother sees her sons squabbling over anything, she admonishes, asking them to deal with each other 'like brothers'. The admonition is also exercised when a boy stranger comes to visit the family, and the boys are asked to go out and play 'like brothers'. However, the first-born has a prominent position among his brothers and sisters. He acts as his father's representative. He gives orders to the younger brothers and sisters, and at least threatens them with punishment, sometimes telling his father. Other members of the family acknowledge and even support the prerogative of the first-born son. But, on the whole, brothers are expected to form a united front and act as 'two heads under one cap'. Older married brothers are usually held to be responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters after the death of the father.

Yet, in spite of the fact that brothers are expected to stand by each other through thick and thin, they are not encouraged to walk, sit or play together, especially after the age of eleven or twelve. If two or three brothers

[1] M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society' (summary of a lecture given in *Man*, Vol. LI, May 1951).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful.

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb'. The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter Six

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

In this chapter it is intended to outline the procedures and methods that are adopted in this community to inculcate the norms that transform the child, who is relatively peripheral, into the adult who is the central link in village social life. The transition can be considered, as Fortes puts it, as one 'from an economically passive burden into a producer, from a biological unit into a social personality, irretrievably cast in the habits, disposition, and notions characteristic of his culture'.[1] Fortes has also provided the writer with certain insight in evaluating the learning process as a by-product of the cultural routine, a phenomenon which obtains in the village community. It is obvious that in Silwa the education of children is not surrounded, as in some primitive societies, with ceremonies of initiation, elaborate ritual, or narration of totemic myths. Learning accrues mainly through children's observing, imitating and assisting their adults in their everyday activities. For the villagers express the educational process through emphasizing life and time as the most important educational agencies which mould and influence the character, and provide the experience. The difference between an adult and a child is, on the whole, quantitative rather than qualitative. The former knows and thus conforms to the cultural norms, while the latter does not. The commonly used word is not the classical word 'tifl' (infant) but another word which is also classical but literally means 'ignorant' (jahil)—and thus identifies ignorance with childhood. It is because of this ignorance of expected skills, norms and attitudes that the children are considered inferior to the adult, and the younger as subservient to the elder.

Here socialization is to include its two aspects of technical training and cultural or regulatory training.[2] In Chapter I it was shown how a boy or a girl is progressively introduced to the economic pursuits of adults, and what skills were expected of them at successive stages of their growth. It was also emphasized how the child was expected to take over from his

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 6.
[2] See Introduction.

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Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn
● 861 through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to
[55] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten
[82] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

85 Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before
[866] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 221–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

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Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills.

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure.

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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responsible for the adult defence mechanism of rigidity and caution. However, one of the well-known characteristics of the Egyptian fellah is his stubbornness, obstinacy and tenacity, which sometimes take the form of an obsession.

Connected with producing fear in the children is the violent and bad-tempered manner in which adults administer punishment to them. Punishment, however, may be in the form of fulminations or curses, or it may be corporal. As mentioned earlier, a father may curse his son by saying 'Curse on your father; a curse on your people; a curse on your origin (seed)', and so on. It seems that such curses have their effect on the children. A child of about nine years old told me that the curse of his parents, especially that of his mother, when she uncovers her head, is a thing which he tries to avoid; one cannot enter Paradise if one invokes one's parents' anger, and their blessings increase one's span of life. Punishment can also take the form of denouncing the boy as a girl, or condemning him as a homosexual, and also through depriving him of his food or his share of meat. On certain occasions, if the child shows reluctance to comply with, or to conform to, its elders' commands, they impugn one of its senses by expressing their disapproval or reproach in phrases such as, 'Aren't you listening?' 'Haven't you got eyes to see?' 'Are you blind?' 'Don't you smell?' 'Don't you feel?' 'Haven't you got blood?' Such phrases imply that the child should have done the accepted thing without being prompted, because he has only to make use of one of his senses. It is occasionally pointed out to the child that his jaw which uttered the words, or his hand that committed the offence, or his ears that heard the unpermissible, should be punished.

Corporal punishment is not uncommon either by beating, striking, whipping or slapping. Such punishment is inflicted upon the child normally after he has committed a serious misdemeanour, such as talking back at his parents while being rebuked, throwing stones at his mother, causing trouble with the neighbours' children, or on complaints being made against him by an older person. The child's ambivalent attitude towards its parents or uncles expresses itself in its appeal for their mercy when it is thrashed by one of them. He makes a screaming appeal, by crying out: 'O father, O father, by the name of the Prophet, O father', even if the father himself happens to be the one who is thrashing him.

The mother invariably gets the worst of the child's temper, aggression and disobedience, and consequently she is apt to administer punishment more frequently than the father. She is the parent with whom the child comes into active contact in terms of give and take. The child feels her punishing powers as he breaks things, loiters on being sent on an errand, loses money which he was given to buy things from the shop, or when he makes himself a nuisance when visitors are in the house, and similar other misdemeanours. Having more contacts with children's problems of upbringing, the mother tends to be the target of their ambivalence; they

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

577 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [857] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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It does not require any emphasis here to point out that the effects of these techniques of fear as forcing children to resort to lies and deception are reflected later in the prevailing atmosphere of adult life which is charged with suspicion, secrecy and apprehension. Fear, moreover, is an efficient lever for the maintenance of social cohesion in the pattern of father-son relationship, and hence it is not surprising to find the common saying that 'fear is a blissful thing' (al khof baraka). 577 [156]

The popular sayings connected with the administering of punishment are also varied and inconsistent, perhaps to maintain a balance and to avoid excess. On the one hand one hears phrases such as 'If you don't beat the child, nothing good would come out of him', 'The stick is for the disobedient', 'Those who do not feel, the stick would make them feel'. On the other hand, there are other sayings such as 'The stick makes the boy dumb'. 'The threat would have no effect on those who do not obey spontaneously', It is considered, however, that childhood is the most appropriate period for punishing and disciplining the child. It is said that the child during this time is like the maize plant in its second irrigation (this irrigation is considered to be important for the plant's growth and is preceded by the pulling out of the grass and other weeds). The concentration of punishment at this period is justified on the grounds that the boy or the girl at this stage is neither too young nor too old to learn. The only form of corporal punishment administered to adolescents on some rare occasions is slapping. 861

However, the administering of punishment by parents to children is checked from being unduly excessive by other relatives, neighbours or other adults who happen to be present. Mediation (literally separation—'hajazat') as institutionalized in the 'Arab council' is an important force in the legal and social functioning of the community.[1] It is practised by children themselves and even mock fights are sometimes played by them to enjoy the wranglings of conciliation similar to those amongst the adults. Some children told me that on seeing their parents quarrelling, they immediately go out of the house to invite one of their close relatives for mediation. Adults are also expected to stop children's fights if they happen to be passing by, and even punish the disputants.[2] [857] [578]

It is appropriate here to evaluate the period of childhood in Silwa, in comparison with their period of infancy. With the exception of observing sex and religious norms, childhood in Silwa is the period through which a boy or a girl experiences a great number of the pressures of socialization. Some modern anthropologists have pointed out the importance of discontinuities or inconsistencies in child-rearing practices as relevant cultural data especially in connection with personality organization.[3] Esther Goldfrank, for instance, postulates four categories of societies with regard to

[1] See Chapter II. [2] See Appendix X, 'Story Completion'.
[3] Ruth Benedict, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning', in *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, ed. by Kluckhohn and Murray, p. 474.

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the continuity or discontinuity of disciplinary policy between infancy and childhood:

(1) Societies where infant and later disciplines are weak.
(2) Societies where infant and later disciplines are severe.
(3) Societies where infant disciplines are severe and later disciplines are weak.
(4) Societies where infant disciplines are weak, and later disciplines are severe.

Goldfrank continues to say: 'From the standpoint of logic these categories pose no problems. However, difficulties may arise when an attempt is made to assign specific societies to any one of them, for permissiveness and pressure are present at all stages of development.'[1] The writer feels that the child-rearing practices compared with infant practices could be classified, without much debate or appearance of subjectivity, into the fourth category of societies where infant disciplines are weak, permissive, and protective, while the later disciplines are prompt, strict, and on the whole, severe.

It has been shown in Chapter IV on infancy how the angelic children are treated permissively and with very few controls until they start to respond orally to the external world. Perhaps the only forbidden fruit in the mother's paradise for the child is the biting of her breast while he is suckling, which normally results in her withdrawal of the breast from him, and might be accompanied by some angry words or a push. On the other hand, we have noticed how the period of childhood is seized upon to discipline the child, and make him conform as well as know his position in the adult world.

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In this connection, a question of a psychological nature could be asked. How does the child bridge the gap or adjust himself between the early permissive training and the stern childhood discipline without a complete disintegration of his personality? In answer to such a question, certain points must be remembered. The child receives the pressures of socialization, and forgoes his mother's blessings at a stage when he is capable of using his newly-developed interest, such as walking and talking, in his contacts with other children. The social arrangement of the extended family could be also considered as a factor in making up for the mother's deprivation. The rough and aggressive games are an outlet for the strain of socialization during childhood. The gap is also bridged through the integration of the child into the work of the adults. From the economic point of view, the child is continuously conditioned to participate in farm work as a responsible member. Through work in the fields, which is meaningful for the child and indispensable to his family, the child is incorporated in the family circle, and is recognized as a valuable member in it,

[1] Esther S. Goldfrank, 'Socialization, Personality and the Structure of the Pueblo Society', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLVII, 1945, p. 517.

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858 to those of the adults, he is debarred from adult circles, and adult activities; and grown-ups do not expect their children to express any opinion on matters which are outside their domain. Although they are expected to orientate themselves to the same sphere of life, children are not given any significant role in the social life of the village, apart from their economic role. Until the age of twelve the children are not expected to go to the mosque to say their prayers, and if they go they are allowed to [199] sit in the back row only, and never in the front or the middle. Women and girls, however, do not go to the mosque at all in Silwa, and are not expected to do so. There is no religious sanction for this, however; Islam has enjoined mosque prayers on both sexes. Compared with the Tale child, the social sphere of the Silwa child is more restricted in many respects. In the former society, the social sphere of adults and children is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. 'Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children, or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system.'[1] In Silwa, however, although children may know about the happenings and events of the adult world in the social sphere, they are not expected to take an active part, or to show interest in them, unless they are asked to do so. On some occasions the writer heard children who, on enquiring about the guests coming to the house, or the nature of the gifts taken to relatives, or where father was going, were silenced and asked to 'mind their own business'.

828 Moreover, the process of 'growing-up' is believed to be affected by the character traits of the parents and close relatives on both the patrilineal and matrilineal side.[2] The belief is that the virtues and vices of the parents and their family line are transmitted, through heredity, to their offspring. Especially in the case of outstanding physical features or social characteristics, their presence is invariably accounted for by inheritance from ancestors; if not directly inherited from the parents, they could be traced to the grandfather or to the great-grandfather. Trends of character, whether of meanness, hospitality, piety, wickedness, aggression or docility, seem to run in the families. A person who deviates from what is known about his family is referred to as 'a mistake' or 'a slip', whether in praise or blame depending on the context. One hears sayings and phrases to the effect that 'so-and-so by nature is good or bad'; 'his roots are rotten'; 'nature prevails over nurture (attaba yaghlib attatbu)'; 'people are of different metals; those who were good in the pre-Islamic period, will be equally good in Islam (annas maadin), Khiyaruhum fi al-Jahiliya, khiyaruhum fi al-Islam'.

861 It must be pointed out here that the process of socialization which is strongly felt during childhood and adolescence is not only conducted through the agency of the family, both conjugal and extended, but also

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 9.
[2] See Chapter IV, concerning the child's character traits.

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through age and sex groups. The family does not directly play as great a part in the educative process in Silwa as in towns or cities of Egypt. An equally if not more important part is played by other children, adults other than the parents, play-groups, gossip gatherings, groups of girls going to fill their jars, or groups of boys fetching fertilizer, situations of hand-washing, tea-serving, ceremonies and celebrations, and by hundreds of other life situations which go to communicate the heritage of the village life to the growing child. In Silwa, like the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala, 'the heritage of the group is communicated in situations much less clearly defined than institutions . . . (through) that multitude of daily situations in which by word or gesture, some part of the tradition is communicated from one individual to another'.[1] The literary and written aspects of the village Islamic culture are left to a few literary people who teach or recite the Holy Book and enlighten the other villagers on religious matters; while theoretical religious knowledge is the concern of a few, all are concerned with the ritual aspects of religion such as prayers and fasting.

Moreover, the slow rate of social change in the village has hardly affected the aims and methods of socialization. Children are reared approximately in the same way as their parents and are expected to imbibe the same cultural assumptions, and follow the same path. A qualification must be added here. Growing up in a folk homogeneous society does not necessarily mean a smooth, painless or unhampered process. But however traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as viable, and to that extent, bearable.[2] Intensive case studies would certainly reveal the various problems of social adjustment, and show the compensatory mechanisms of those who fail to measure up to the ritual assumptions and requirements.

[1] Robert Redfield, 'Culture and Education in the Midwestern Highlands of Guatemala', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 644.

[2] Margaret Mead, 'The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, p. 633.

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
[53] cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers [562] by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

[159] "AND for Syphilis (*tashwīsh*) they 'prescribed' incensing,
Which an "old wife" among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [=the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation?
And does their 'incensing' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton?"

Some of the "old wives" in the provinces were famed in past ages for their "cure" of venereal disease by "incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mabkhara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An "old wife" came to "incense" a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from [164] retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the "incensing" of the "doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl maslūkh*). This bogey corresponds to our [illegible] on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). [illegible] my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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23.

Enough of Play!

×539 861 The mothers have difficulty every evening, in inducing the children, who play in the streets until late in the evening, to come home to supper.

A child who is sent out to get the others, speaks:

Ya laʿibin kull el-lēle,
itʿaššu u-taʿālu!
Win mā gētûš il-lēle,
laḥaddifkum bi-ʾulʾēle,
5 *simm el-fār*
miʾ el-ʿaṭṭār.
[Iḫbaṭ ya ṭār
kull el-lēle!]

You, who play all night,
Come and have your supper!
And if you do not come this evening,
I shall throw a clod at you!
5 Mouse-poison
Is (to be had) at the grocer's!
[534] [Beat, tambourine,
The whole night through].

[805] 1. Night begins at sunset. Lēle, "night", often designates, therefore, our evening.
5. 6 I might poison you!
7. 8 May have been taken from some other song.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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69.

Why Dost Thou Beat me, Mother?

539x
861

Bil-amān, ya-lummē,
wa-la tuḍrub aiye!
Lē tuḍrubni
wana-smi Lēle?
5 *Rumman ṣudri ṭāb*
u-ṭaraḥ eg-genēne.
Ana ma'ak 'and el-'āḍi
fi-hāza-l-lēle.

Do not punish me, mother,
And do not beat me!
Why dost thou beat me
When my name is Lēle ("night")?
5 The pomegranates of my breast are ripe,
And the garden beareth fruit.
I shall go with thee to the judge
This very evening.

4. The word lēle, "night", and Lēle, the name of a girl, have nothing to do with one another. They were originally two different words, which, in the modern language, have the same sound and for that reason are made use of here for a pun.

The girl means: "Is it not perfectly natural, that I should think of things which my very name suggests?"

7. He will concede that I am right! The 'āḍi (Qâdi) or ecclesiastical judge, is called upon to decide especially in affairs of marriage.

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BIRTH, INFANCY AND EARLY TRAINING

853 asked to count the number of times she suckled her child over a week, reported that it varied between six and fifteen times a day. The time of each nursing varies, but it is admitted that the louder or longer the child cries the greater the time the mother expends on its suckling.

[091] The dress of women actually helps in nursing the child without delay immediately he cries. Either through the dress neck-opening, which is always cut low, or the two openings, one on each breast, the mother extrudes her breast for the child. Sometimes in the presence of female strangers, or very close male relatives, the child is nursed while covered with the top garment, the breast and the child hidden between the two garments. The mother usually offers the nipple between her middle and index fingers to the child who eagerly leans towards it and grasps it. The suckling child is allowed to play freely with his mother's breast, even while alternating from one breast to another. A mother nurses her child while she is sewing, spinning, cooking or even eating. When the child grows older it can induce its mother to nurse it by rubbing its head on her breast or by inserting its hand into one of the openings.

Usually the child suckles till it is satisfied, but it also happens that the nipple is withdrawn from it whenever the mother feels that it is satisfied, or when she has to engage on an immediate task, to give it the breast later. It is worthwhile noting that the child gets the breast either when it needs it or when the breast is full, and it is withdrawn from it when it is satisfied, or when its mother feels that she has got to withdraw her breast when circumstances of her work demand it. Yet the need of the child, even theoretically, is the overriding factor in suckling. Occasions of tantalizing with the breast are reported when mothers show or play about with their breast for their children, the game invariably ending with the suckler getting the breast. It is forbidden (haram) to deprive the child of the breast once it has been tantalized. Some women in the village are known to be neglectful of their children with regard to nursing. They are reported as saying that if they attend wholly to their children, as other women do, they would not be able to attend to their home tasks. Their justification for this is implicit in their famous saying, 'Even dogs, after all, have brought forth offspring'.

● 862 The period of nursing, on the whole, varies from child to child and from mother to mother, depending on the health of the child or the arrival of the next baby, or on the mother's milk. No child is ever weaned before the end of the first year. Some children are suckled for two years and a few as long as three years. The average period for most children is between a year and a year and a half. It is reported also that very few mothers nurse two children at the same time, and this custom was more common about twenty years ago, when the period of suckling was longer on the whole.

853 It is felt in the village that there is a definite relationship between 842 lactation and future pregnancy, and if a woman wishes to become pregnant

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she curtails her nursing period but never before the termination of the first year. In this case, the 'milking goat', whose milk is preferred to that of a cow, being 'lighter', would help in feeding the child. My female informant insisted that the contrary never occurs, that a woman prolongs her nursing period to prevent pregnancy. At this point the official ideology of women differs from that in Artas as stated by Granqvist in the following quotation: 853 842

'As it is generally assumed that nursing makes a new pregnancy more difficult it may be thought that the women use it in self-protection, to postpone the unwished-for pregnancy. Women's work is so hard that it is almost unbelievable that they should wish to be constantly bearing children.'

The writer has enquired whether the same is being practised in Silwa, but he was assured the opposite. His informant might have wanted to hide this fact, as the logical conclusion of the relationship between conception and lactation lends itself to its use in the self-protective way mentioned by Granqvist. The informant added that it is the child's indisputable right to suck as long as it wants, otherwise it would become obstinate and disobedient, and it is only to pursue the more desired aim of fresh pregnancy that the mother is obliged to curtail the nursing period.

It is also recognized that a boy is usually nursed less than a girl, which also differs from the custom in Artas. The purpose is that though both should be infused with the mother's compassion, the girl is supposed to be imbued with more of it than the boy, and consequently her nursing should be longer. Yet if a newly-married woman begets a girl in her first birth, the custom is to curtail her nursing period in order to hurry the next pregnancy in the hope of begetting a boy. The short period of boys' nursing compared to that of girls' is also a clear indication of the accelerating process of boys' growth. The case of the boy who is brought up by a widow and nursed for a long time is a proverbial one for 'his unreliability, his being easily swayed, and his inability to make up his mind'. Any person who evidences such character traits is designated as one who was brought up by a widow.[1] 853 [842] [570]

The different claims of the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides on the infant express themselves in the assumed different attitudes between father and mother with regard to weaning. While mothers consider a long period of suckling as conducive to compassion, fathers regard it as 'darkening the infant's mind'. This difference in attitude towards weaning could be taken as a reflection of the matrilineal sentiment, contrasted with the paternal desire of subjecting the infant to social discipline as early as possible.[2] 862 [828]

What is also significant is the rigid observance of the nursing of the child by his relatives. One of the main injunctions of the Koran is the pro- 853 582

[1] It also means that he has not been disciplined by his father, as will be shown later.
[2] See Chapter II.

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who married a member of the carpenter family is usually a source of gossip and warning against such mixture. 582

In pursuing the subject of infant nursing, it is to be noted that the child does not rely entirely on mother's milk during all its nursing period, as after the fourth month it is introduced to premasticated adult food. The bits that cannot be swallowed are collected and inserted again in its mouth. Premasticated food is used more in the case of boys than girls, to help mother's milk in accelerating growth. 853

During nursing it is quite common to see a child sucking his fingers or pushing his fist into his mouth. He is actually encouraged in doing this by his mother, who sometimes puts her own finger into the child's mouth. The need is recognized more during the teething period, that is in the fourth or fifth month. For this purpose of sucking, the mother hangs a kind of loose string round the neck of the child with a bundle of hard stuff tied in a piece of cloth, and this is supposed to assist tooth-cutting. 856

When the mother starts weaning her child, she increases the amount of premasticated food given to it. She begins by weaning her child first from one breast, and later from the other. She stops milk from the breast by rubbing the nipple with a concoction of spices, ground sheep tripe, henna, cactus juice and salt stone. After 'stopping milk' the mother turns her dress back to front so that its neck and side openings hang at the back, the child thus finding no access to the breast. For the first two days of weaning, coloured hard-boiled eggs are given to the child to play with and then to eat, whenever he wishes. In psycho-analytical language, mothers in Silwa recognize weaning as a 'traumatic experience' for the child and do their best to absorb the child's attention in other directions, especially in play with other children or providing it with some delicacies of food. 862

The weaning must always be arranged in such a way that it is completed in two or three days before the beginning of the lunar month. It is believed to be very difficult to wean a child after the appearance of the new moon, and it must be left till towards the end of it. It is also believed that a woman who weans at the beginning of the month will find it difficult to bear children. This must be also observed in connection with the circumcision of girls, so that the girl will not become sterile or find it difficult to conceive. Here, one notes the striking relation between the moon and such social phenomena as weaning and circumcision. One might be led to infer that the moon must have been connected with fertility rites in some periods of Egyptian history. It is also observed by mothers that weaning of their children must not be declared immediately, but after a lapse of at least two weeks for fear of the evil eye, or 'pressure' on the mother's power to conceive. [821] [842] [304] [821]

The third basic need of the child, after the mother's bodily warmth and nursing, is the need for 'evacuation'. For the first four months (before the child can sit up) it is allowed to urinate and defaecate in a piece of cloth wrapped round its body from the waist to the knees, under its 854

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865 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own
593 care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the
[152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the
[853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on
865 to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next
[862] oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would
CCD 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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play group as a relative, or warned against joining them on the grounds of their being strangers. 851 593

Furthermore an age group can only extend itself, though not freely or without reserve, to the age group directly senior to it.[1] In other words, boys, for example, may be seen playing or sitting with adolescents or young unmarried men, but are not expected to mix with grown-up men. Adolescents and young men may also be seen sitting on the fringe of an adult gathering, though very infrequently. At night a man may be chatting with a group of older boys, but always sitting on the fringe of their gathering, as an indication of his aloofness. Such behaviour related to the three age groups in the village is expressed in the admonition that one 'should not exceed the limits in his behaviour'. For example, a boy who passes by a gathering of adults sprawling on the ground is not supposed to greet them, much less pass between them. Rikabi, a boy of twelve years, approached a meeting of neighbours near his home, and greeted them by saying 'Peace be upon you'. This action annoyed his father as well as the others, and provoked the father to reply: 'Go away, may peace crush you.' In this case, the boy was trying to act like a grown-up, but such precociousness is not the accepted behaviour from a boy of his age. Had he been seventeen or eighteen years his greetings would have been accepted and considered praiseworthy. 561 561 858

Terms of courtesy are not expected among the children themselves and avoidance is the best way of showing courtesy between adults and children. With the impact of urban life, polite children are expected to say 'Thank you' or 'May God increase your blessings' to their elders, while the latter seldom show their appreciation of the children's assistance for them, which if ever expressed would be couched in kinship terms such as 'May God increase thy blessings; thou art the master of thy uncle'. 576 [369]

The fourth characteristic of this period of childhood is the striking interest and respect of children for food. It is quite frequent to see boys and girls inside or outside the house holding in their hands a piece of bread or an onion and eating it while they play. They may be also seen tantalizing each other by the type of bread they have, priding themselves on their mother's good baking. Children, on the whole, tend to be preoccupied and interested in food. This shows itself in the children's ordinary conversation, in the amount of details they give in relating a folk story with food themes occurring in it, in their excessive delight in telling about a good meal that they had or that they are going to have. Feasts and ceremonies are first recalled as occasions for excessive good food. Even in both adults' and children's dreams, food is an important element in their manifest content.[2] Children prefer certain relatives to others because they offer them food and tea; they share food with those children whom they like and refuse to share it with those whom they dislike. 862

[1] See Chapter II for the three age groups in the village.
[2] See Appendix XI, 'A Note on Dreams', and Appendices VIII and X.

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862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. 269 They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while [805] those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

852 The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three 304 and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the [264] adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a 553
different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted 852
at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is 787
the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions 842
have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the 152
evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the 754
child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed 754
as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being 854
led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but 853
if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, 842
of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs [862]
a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being 789
jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic 152
display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase 854
a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. 789
It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, 527
or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural 852
of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

849 Barrenness, they believe, sometimes arises also from the
754 entering in unto the mother of a woman who has weaned her
862 child. The " cure " in this case, according to their statement,
[751] is for the barren woman to carry a rag of wool wet with the milk of a woman who has recently weaned her child.

XXIII

THE ḲARĪNA

164 THE Bedouins name this the " Heat " (*Ḥarāra*). This name
753 is used generally for the class of diseases of the throat (the original symptom of which is difficulty in breathing) such as diphtheria (*khunnāḳ*) and convulsion and drying up of the uvula, and the like. The " prescriptions " of the " old wives "
757 are self-contradictory in regard to its " cure." Some of them think that the correct thing is cauterisation [p. 49] of the child upon its frontal and terminal crown (*yāfūkh*). The child, however, finds relief from their folly, inasmuch as there is
[165] soon set up inflammation of the brain (meningitis), of which it dies.

[539] " And he who does not die of cautery will die of something else ;
The " prescriptions " are many but the death is one."

Others again hold to the belief in replacing the cauterisation by scarifying with a razor instead, on both sides (front and back). This is the method followed by the Bedouin. The Arabs of Mariūṭ and al-Ḥāgir instead of all these, bore two holes in the child's ears through which they pass a thread of
753 red silk. The " old wives " have different absurd theories
776 as to the cause of this disease in children. Some of them claim that every male child has a sister (*ukht*) among the Jinn,

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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854 garment. This cloth can be removed, washed, or just dried, or changed. The child is often wiped with another cloth, but is not necessarily washed, if it soils itself. At the fourth month it is supported between its mother's feet, sitting to defaecate when the mother senses that it is uncomfortable or when it cries, and the cloth is put on only when it goes to bed. No fuss of any kind is made about urine, while more attention is given to faeces, yet revulsion is never shown by the mother. When the child starts to walk
863 it is trained to say 'kaka' when it wants to defaecate, whereupon the mother lifts its garment and asks it to go to a special corner or room in the house or to go outside. After the age of three or four most parents insist that both boys and girls defaecate outside the house, or go to the special room in the house.

514 While the boys from now on always perform their evacuation outside, the girls are confined to the house again after they reach the age of twelve. Girls always squat for urination while boys stand, but on reaching adolescence the latter squat also. In the case of boys, the tucking up of the dress or pants and the crouching posture of evacuation tend to direct attention to the exposed genitals, while in the case of girls, after the age of six or seven at most, they, in contrast, envelop the whole process with their dress, which is never tucked up. One can see boys of all ages up to eight or nine evacuating within sight, with no sense of embarrassment. When they reach puberty they seek out-of-the-way places, facing a stone or a heap.

863 It is not without justification that one can make the hypothesis that the absence of disgust towards faeces and urine with regard to the infants' early training is a cultural way of conditioning the individual to bear tolerantly the odour that attends the village sanitary conditions, swamps, and handling of animal dung either as fertilizer or as fuel.

856 Sitting and teething are considered as important events to be watched in the child's growth. By the end of the fourth month the mother begins to train her child to sit up. The saying is that a boy of four months must be able to sit up, or he should be beaten. The girl is expected to be able to sit up a little later, at the end of the fifth month. The mother makes her son sit up on the ground with his legs outstretched, supporting his back with her hands, or puts him in a large mixing or cooking pan with tall curving sides. If the boy is not taught to sit up for himself at this age, and abandon gradually the horizontal suckling position, he would be liable to have an
[827] unpleasant breath smell when he grows up.

It is also recognized that teething is accompanied by either ophthalmia
[157] or diarrhoea. The mother's milk is sometimes used as a treatment for the sore eyes at this period.

On the first instance of the breaking of any of the milk teeth, at the age
852 of five or six, the tooth is put into donkey dung and thrown into the 'sun's eye', asking the sun to change the donkey's tooth for a tooth of a gazelle.

[304] Another important event in the child's life after the end of the forty

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [252] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are un- [744] methodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

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Chapter Five

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In this chapter the main characteristics and events of childhood affecting both the social and psychological aspects of the individual's personality in Silwa are to be discussed. Infancy, with which we dealt in the last chapter, is regarded as the three or four years of the person's life at the end of which, whatever the family and individual variations may be, the infant is weaned, begins to talk and responds to adult commands. The following years are those of childhood until the age of twelve or thirteen, when the boy or the girl, at puberty, enters the adolescent stage.

In our consideration of the process of 'growing up' of children, there is hardly need to stress the fact that the process is not identical for all children. It is beyond any question that there are certain forces and conditions that bring about 'the distinctive personality constellations', e.g. the death of a sibling older or younger, loss of a mother, a father, state of child's health, child's birth order, age of parents at the time of child's birth.[1] These distinctive factors with their concomitant individual differences are recognized by the villagers. A child may be referred to as a 'child of old parents' (waldat 'ajayiz) and is usually characterized by being precocious in his development, or a 'child brought forth in the years of plenty or in the lean years', the former possessing easy and happy disposition, while the latter is expected to be nagging and irritable. In the next two chapters, however, the common prevailing forces that leave their impact on the personality development of the village children are discussed.

One of the main characteristics of this period of childhood is the pressure of sibling rivalry which is socially recognized, being evidenced in certain symbolic forms of wear, folk-lore, and symptoms of sickness. Sibling rivalry, however, is not peculiar to the child's growing up in Silwa, but, as demonstrated by Levy's projective doll-playing tests, 'represents a

[1] Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Personality Formation among the Navaho Indians', in *Sociometry*, Vol. IX, 1946, pp. 130–1.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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865 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own
593 care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the
[152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the
[853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did
865 not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next
[862] oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would
000 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings. 865 858

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1] 865 593 152 [151]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents. 865 593 152 755 [154] [154]

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'. [195]

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865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling [867] rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incen- [626] tives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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responsible for the adult defence mechanism of rigidity and caution. However, one of the well-known characteristics of the Egyptian fellah is his stubbornness, obstinacy and tenacity, which sometimes take the form of an obsession.

Connected with producing fear in the children is the violent and bad-tempered manner in which adults administer punishment to them. Punishment, however, may be in the form of fulminations or curses, or it may be corporal. As mentioned earlier, a father may curse his son by saying 'Curse on your father; a curse on your people; a curse on your origin (seed)', and so on. It seems that such curses have their effect on the children. A child of about nine years old told me that the curse of his parents, especially that of his mother, when she uncovers her head, is a thing which he tries to avoid; one cannot enter Paradise if one invokes one's parents' anger, and their blessings increase one's span of life. Punishment can also take the form of denouncing the boy as a girl, or condemning him as a homosexual, and also through depriving him of his food or his share of meat. On certain occasions, if the child shows reluctance to comply with, or to conform to, its elders' commands, they impugn one of its senses by expressing their disapproval or reproach in phrases such as, 'Aren't you listening?' 'Haven't you got eyes to see?' 'Are you blind?' 'Don't you smell?' 'Don't you feel?' 'Haven't you got blood?' Such phrases imply that the child should have done the accepted thing without being prompted, because he has only to make use of one of his senses. It is occasionally pointed out to the child that his jaw which uttered the words, or his hand that committed the offence, or his ears that heard the unpermissible, should be punished.

Corporal punishment is not uncommon either by beating, striking, whipping or slapping. Such punishment is inflicted upon the child normally after he has committed a serious misdemeanour, such as talking back at his parents while being rebuked, throwing stones at his mother, causing trouble with the neighbours' children, or on complaints being made against him by an older person. The child's ambivalent attitude towards its parents or uncles expresses itself in its appeal for their mercy when it is thrashed by one of them. He makes a screaming appeal, by crying out: 'O father, O father, by the name of the Prophet, O father', even if the father himself happens to be the one who is thrashing him.

The mother invariably gets the worst of the child's temper, aggression and disobedience, and consequently she is apt to administer punishment more frequently than the father. She is the parent with whom the child comes into active contact in terms of give and take. The child feels her punishing powers as he breaks things, loiters on being sent on an errand, loses money which he was given to buy things from the shop, or when he makes himself a nuisance when visitors are in the house, and similar other misdemeanours. Having more contacts with children's problems of upbringing, the mother tends to be the target of their ambivalence; they

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wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran.

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab.

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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855 be explained as a result of the cultural pressure for a large family, the
854 achievement of which is threatened by the high death rate among children. Parents feel that they have done their duty towards the child's care immediately he is able to walk and talk, and the rest of his development is left to God's protection. Moreover, the relatively low mortality rate amongst sucklings in Silwa is due to the fact that they depend mainly upon their mother's milk, while after weaning, adult food is given to the
[196] children which cannot be an adequate substitute for the mother's milk because of its unsuitability and deficiency. Yet it must be noted here that
195 children in the province of Aswan are very much undernourished compared with the normal healthy development of other more fortunate children. They are ten centimetres (about 4 inches) less in height, and five kilograms (about 12 pounds) less in weight, and the percentage of haemoglobin in their blood is only 40 per cent.[1]

859 A third important characteristic of this period of childhood is the integration of the boy or the girl with the play group and age mates. About the age of three, the child's attachment to his mother is expected to be over,
[866] and this means gradually increasing its contacts with its age group outside the household, and thus the child directs itself, first to its elder siblings and relatives, and then gradually to other children in its play activities. The child may be led by hand or straddled on the shoulder by an older sister to watch other children playing, or taken to defaecate where other children do the same thing. The authority of the older sibling plays a dominant
857 part in shaping the child's attitudes from now onwards. The older sisters
593 or brothers act as guardians for their younger siblings; they soothe them when they cry, protect them from interference from other boys or girls. While older boys are playing, one might hear one of them saying: 'Your brother is crying, and I'll have nothing to do with him, you are his brother and you should quieten him.' It is accepted that if the older brothers and sisters are about, other boys and girls hardly ever interfere with the younger siblings for fear of being blamed for their crying or injury. It must be pointed out here that boys are usually less burdened with the care of their younger brothers compared with girls, and this is probably one of the reasons that gives the boys freer scope for movement and rough play.

The younger boys and girls form the fringe of their older siblings' playgroups, but gradually they start to form their own groups, and imitate their elders. One finds that younger boys of five or six might be playing with their older brothers in one game, but one hardly finds boys of eight or nine in the same play group as their older brothers of the age of twelve, thirteen or fourteen. On the whole, siblings after the age of seven or eight usually prefer to go to different places for their games, and till that age, the basis of play is blood relationship and neighbourhood. A stranger boy who wants to join other children in their play is either introduced to the

[1] Ministry of Health Statistics quoted by M. Khattab, in a speech in the Upper House of Parliament, in *Al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily paper), 26 December 1940.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn
861 through their association with slightly older boys and girls (by three or four years but certainly not more than five or six years) who usually assume the role of leadership or teachers in work or play. As in Tale society, every pupil becomes, in some situation, a teacher for others.

It must be noted, however, that the behaviour pattern and motivation in the learning situation where adults are involved are different from those of the age-group learning situation. In the former, subservience, respect, and fear are expected, while in the latter rivalry and reciprocity on equal terms are the norms. If the child does not come up to adult expectation, it is because 'it deliberately twists its neck which should be straightened by a slap'. Discipline and compulsion are the means for enforcing conformity and 'adab' on children by their elders. On the other hand, amongst the age groups, mocking, ridiculing, and scoffing at those who do not reach the expected level of maturity are the pressures exerted by their peers. In this connection, nicknames are frequently used by children to
[55] single out the ones who are laggards in their social maturity, partly a continuation of the sibling rivalry pattern of motivation.

The two following examples indicate some of the ways in which boys deal with each other. A boy of fifteen who did not appear weak found it rather difficult for some time to fill the panniers of his camel with fertilizer, and other boys had to help him. Failing to perform the task expected from boys of his age, his fellows decided to put a girl's headcloth round his head-cap, by taking off his turban. Then he was tied to the panniers and the other boys led the half-laden camel to the field. This method, occasionally resorted to by such boys, is supposed to awaken the sense of shame in those who are not sufficiently keen on doing what is expected of them. The other example is that of a fight of a boy of about ten
[82] years old with other boys because he 'broke wind' while they were playing. When asked, he denied the fact, and they went on smelling each other. When they discovered that he was the culprit, they started building him a grave in which they buried a stone as a symbol for the boy, shouting 'the farter is here, the farter is here'. They also bewailed him as adults would bewail a deceased person, by saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet'. Indeed, lack of control and modesty after the age of ten can be a source of ridicule for children about this age.

Moreover, if restraint and docility are the keynotes of child behaviour
857 towards adults, a free and impulsive life reigns amongst children themselves. Their own problems must be kept to themselves and not communicated whenever possible to their adults, who are not expected to enquire about children's activities. For children, it is gossip that a child would go and tell his parents what other boys and girls have been saying or doing. If two boys or more start quarrelling with each other, they should fight the issue out for themselves. The laying of complaints by children before
[866] their elders about quarrels with other children is greatly discouraged, and when complaints are taken up by fussy parents, they might keep the whole

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

Such relations and norms governing the relationship between the family members reflect and imply certain ways of behaviour which the child imbibes within the family circle. They also reflect some of the necessary requirements for the harmonious functioning of the various social units. The family in Silwa is one of the fields of teaching, and here more perhaps of learning, some of the standardized social relations and their moral significance.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ACTION

Here some of the functions of the social structure have been examined. It is doubtless true that structural norms provide the articulating force in the village society, acting as traffic lights for individual behaviour. They define personal and corporate rights and duties with individuals, families and clans; indicate the extent of emotional involvement, which is expected to be very strong with close relatives, and joint family, fading somewhat in intensity as the kin spreads in the clan. They also specify the kind of relationship with the patrilineal and the matrilineal sides. Differentiation in kinship relations carries with it differentiation of behaviour, rights and obligations, and affective attachments.

Moreover, the individual faces each of life's rejoicings or crises not only by himself but with the support and co-operation of all those related to him either by patrilineal ('asaba), matrilineal (lahma) and in-law (nasab) relationship, or any other intimate ties. The extent and frequency of such a support, and the hierarchical unit that undertakes the help, varies according to the situation envisaged, to the number of close relatives, and to the prestige of the person.

In sickness, for instance, it is worth noting how kinsmen and kinswomen flock to visit a sick person, talk to him, attempt to alleviate his pain, pray for his safety, and give advice and medicine.

There is a popular song which indicates the amount of security and pride that a sick man derives from being surrounded by his family and people. The song imagines a conversation between a doctor and a sick person, where the doctor asks who is going to pay for the medicine. The sick person is shocked by such a question and instantly replies that he has so many people who will see to it. The song goes on to show how each member of the family offers the doctor something in turn. But in the end the patient dies, because he is so aggravated and embittered by the doctor's question, which implied that he had no people to attend him in such a matter as paying the doctor's fees and medicine charges. 'To have no people' is one of the greatest insults that could be directed to any person. The song goes:

> A sick person asked the doctor to treat him.
> The doctor agreed, but enquired as to who was responsible for paying the expenses of treatment.
> The sick person replied: 'O doctor, don't think that I am without support.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

865 593 Moreover, it was significant that when my informant declared that the rivalry was an essential incentive in the process of growing up, she added that it would enable the child to stand up to its rivals on becoming an adult. The use of sibling rivalry could also be related to the brothers' avoidance of each other, especially in formal gatherings, and also to the cultural expectation of brothers' friction and wranglings which are quite frequent amongst adults in the village.[1]

Certain families in the village try to provoke sibling rivalry, if it is not manifested strongly between children, by giving the older sibling a nickname, 'A ram which drinks from the water, left after baking'—meaning that he is good for nothing, while calling the younger sibling a camel—being a useful animal, and thus motivating the former to conform to what is expected from a boy of his age. In one of the families, Hassan, who is four years old, and Taha, who is two years old, are two brothers; one called 'Hassan al-dalihi'—the stupid one, while Taha is labelled 'al-nasih'—the clever. This nicknaming was due, according to their mother, to the fact that Hassan was seldom as alert as other boys of his age, and this nickname was supposed to shake him up. The writer noticed that Hassan was always asked to do things with reference to his younger brother. His mother would say: 'Eat this before Taha takes it', and this was accompanied by a movement towards Taha as if she was going to give him the food. Sometimes she would say: 'Take it, or I will give it to Taha', even if the latter were not present. In another house, the mother asked Fatima, the naughty girl, who was reluctant to comb her hair, to come to her before Sakina, the good girl, did so. Fatima was still disobedient, and so the mother started combing Sakina's hair, and immediately Fatima dashed towards her mother and lowered her head for combing. The normal procedure in giving nicknames is to call the younger child with a self-deprecating word, to appease [551] the older one, which is compatible with the hierarchical structure of the family. Reversing this order, by giving a good name to the younger, is only resorted to for the purpose of fostering the desired amount of sibling rivalry indispensable in the villagers' views for healthy development. To experience rivalry with a sibling or cousin is regarded as making the child grow to be a 'hot' man, in contrast to one who is 'blunt'—who is not easily moved or provoked. It is also noticed that a visitor, on meeting a child of the house, usually asks him the hackneyed question: 'Who is better, you or your brother?' One is justified in considering the emphasis on sibling rivalry as a cultural means of motivating the child to abandon his babyish [867] attitudes and behave according to his age.

It is worth mentioning that the motivation of rivalry connected with the presence, actual or potential, of another person, is one of the strong incentives for appropriate behaviour, which combines social conformity with a [626] high-pressure ego development.

[1] M. Fortes remarks that among the Tallensi, open recognition of sibling rivalry prevents it from turning into a disruptive element in the relations of siblings. *The Web of Kinship*, footnote, p. 235.

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branches in their hands, and in front of every house they stand chanting at the top of their voices, while swaying their branches. They call out together, 'Give us the custom, either a pigeon, a fat hen, a cock, or an egg'. At the end of the round the group of boys return home with what they may have collected to partake of a meal well-prepared by the mother of the circumcised boy. This round is actually considered to be the female contributions to the circumcised boy and his family. In this way the boy and his age group not only witness the web of social reciprocity, but they are actively introduced to it.

The purpose of circumcising girls, according to the village midwife, is to prevent any suspicion on the bridegroom's part that the bride is not a virgin. The midwife, with her surgical instruments provided by the Ministry of Health, seats the girl on a chair, or vessel, while three women assist her by holding the girl's legs apart as well as supporting her back, a posture very similar to that assumed at childbirth. Girls are usually circumcised at a later age than the boys, when they are about seven or eight.

After the operation the legs are tied together at the thighs and ankles to prevent violent movement and thus render the operation successful. The ties are usually undone after a week or ten days, during which time the girl is fed in a similar way to the boy.

Anthropologists consider circumcision ceremonies as *rites de passage*; they are undoubtedly of great significance to the family, as well as to the child, especially if he is old enough. It is an intra-familial activity, and an occasion for the exchange of mutual obligations. The father receives his due contributions from relatives and friends to whom he has rendered such an obligation previously. Fathers keep a book, where they register those who have brought their contributions, and the amount which they have given. Traditionally, the fact that someone contributes to your ceremony counts rather than the amount of his contributions, that is, the relevant and compelling force is the carrying-out of mutual obligations on an occasion of circumcision. To illustrate this, a father who has one son should contribute to all those who have sent their contributions on the occasion of circumcising, not only their first sons, but all their sons. It is obvious here that the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspect of the social obligation is the more important. For the last ten years, however, there has been an increasing trend towards contributing on the same number of occasions as one has received a contribution from a particular person. Discussion and wrangling occasionally arise as to the appropriate way of 'give and take' on such occasions. Some people have struck a compromise so that the contributions are equalized between the same number of children, whereas the contributions towards the extra number of children are less in value and are made with a view to keeping the social relationships intact.

In ceremonies of circumcision, wedding, and preparation for pilgrimage, contributions (nakout) play a considerable part, especially in the case of

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the first two ceremonies, in covering the expenses incurred during the celebrations. It is known by the villagers that on such occasions one usually gains financially, as the person who is celebrating is paid back on one evening all that he had invested previously at different times, and thus it is a time for getting back one's savings.[1] Such reciprocal aid in these ceremonies does not make such enterprises a burdensome task in Silwa and in many other villages in the province of Aswan. This is different from the conditions obtaining in the province of Sharqiya. In 1940 Dr. Abbas Ammar reported that 11·8 of the indebtedness of the people of Sharqiya was due to expenses incurred on wedding celebrations.[2]

One often reads outright condemnation of such ceremonial celebrations which make many a fellah fall into debt. It must be remembered that the desire for the prestige connected with a sense of plenty as expressed in feasts and ceremonies is a natural human tendency. In this connection Freud says: 'A festival is a permitted, or rather an obligatory, excess, a solemn breach of a prohibition. . . . It is not that men commit the excess because they are feeling happy as a result of an injunction they have received. It is rather that excess is of the essence of a festival; the festive feeling is produced by the liberty to do what is as a rule prohibited.'[3]

It is not so important here whether one accepts Freud's argument or not; what is more vital is to realize that such ceremonial occasions provide the fellaheen with a healthy scope for the expressive elements in human behaviour and life in general, without which existence would become monotonous. To view such celebrations only as one of the main causes of the fellah's indebtedness, as some social reformers in Egypt do, ignores the social framework of valuations. Such ceremonies of circumcision, weddings, funerals, are occasions where the community gives reality to some of its social ideals and practices. They also act as a social mode of catharsis for the family and the individual concerned through which they acquire and satisfy what social psychologists call the 'sense of belonging' and the demands of group loyalty and morality.[4]

There is no doubt that the circumcision ceremony is a formal occasion for introducing the child into the wider circle of family relatives and to the whole village. This occasion is taken to express bonds of blood, affinal or friendly relationships between the family of the circumcised boy and other families. It is interesting to note that the boy's mother is the first and only female contributor in the announcement ceremony, and her contribution of corn, dates and sugar goes to the announcer. Other close relatives such as an uncle, or grandfather, have also to contribute on this

[1] This reminds the writer of one of Malinowski's findings showing that the ceremonial treatment of certain aspects of life, e.g. sex, crises of human existence, are more than the assertion of their social significance but also have a pragmatic value.

[2] Abbas M. Ammar, 'The People of Sharqiya', Ph.D. Thesis (Manchester University), 1940, pp. 428, 429.

[3] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London, 1950.

[4] See S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, pp. 343–4.

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occasion, even if they live with the father in the same household. Dispute between brothers or sisters is usually an irrelevant factor in the exchange of mutual contributions which are morally compulsory on such occasions. The ideal of the family solidarity must be expressed, at least formally at public ceremonies. The sociological significance of the ceremony cannot be exaggerated, as it must take place even in the case of children whose foreskin is congenitally contracted or damaged by disease. Although such children are believed to be circumcised by the angels, the ceremony is still held, even without any operation on the child.

Traditionally, one of the main justifications for holding the ceremony is the religious significance attached to it throughout the whole Moslem world. To be a Moslem, it is believed, is to be circumcised as distinguished from the non-Moslems, who for the most part are not circumcised. However, there is no text in the Koran that enjoins circumcision upon the Moslem, and it is only mentioned in the prophetic tradition. It is maintained that circumcision was the practice not only of the Prophet Mohammed, but all previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Hud, Saleh, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon. In the prophetic sayings there is no fixed time for the performance of circumcision, as amongst the Jews; it is, however, preferable to have it done before the boy attains maturity. It is reported that the Prophet said, 'Abraham, the friend of the Merciful, was the first man who entertained guests, the first man who underwent circumcision, the first man who shortened his moustache, and the first man who saw grey hairs. He asked, on seeing the grey hairs: "O Lord, what is this?" The Almighty and Glorious Lord said: "Dignity, O Abraham." He said: "O Lord, increase dignity in me."' Another prophetic tradition says, 'Circumcision is my way for men, but is merely ennobling for women'. It is also reported that the Prophet told a woman who was just converted into Islam and was thinking of being circumcised, 'Don't inflict trouble on yourself, because that is painful to a wife, but pleasing to a husband'.[1]

The chain of authorities for most of the Prophet's dicta about circumcision is more often than not weak, and one is justified in regarding them as open to question. The four Schools of Moslem Law differ as to the obligatory nature of circumcision.[2] The practice, however, was widespread, though not universal, in pagan Arabia, and to be uncircumcised —'aghral' or 'aghlaf'—was thought disgraceful. Modern educated Moslems might justify circumcision on hygienic grounds, but the writer did not get any such explicit or implicit explanation from the villagers. For the latter, it literally means religious purification, which makes the person

[1] *Mishkat-al-Masabih*, English translation by al-Haq Maulana-Fazlul Karim, Vol. I, pp. 737–8.

[2] *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Article, 'Circumcision (Muhammadan)', by D. S. Margoliouth. In the same source under 'Circumcision (Ancient Egypt)', it is mentioned that this ritual was practised in Ancient Egypt, although there is no decisive evidence with regard to either its generality or the nature of its practice.

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fit for prayers. It is not uncommon, whether amongst children or adults, to describe a person as disgraceful by saying that he has still got the foreskin. The relation between circumcision and ceremonial purity is also confirmed by the fact that those boys whose prepuce is absent are considered to be purified by the angels. The circumcised boy's dress, that of a religious man in open white shift and a green outer garment, could be also taken as evidence for the purificatory significance of the ritual.

It must be pointed out here that the circumcision of girls has never had the universality of that of the boys; the religious authority behind it is very weak and could be rejected, and even its practice is not universal throughout the Moslem world at present. On the other hand, some of the prophetic traditions, as mentioned earlier, do not specify its desirability for the female, and the absence of such a definite religious backing for it should render its abandonment comparatively easy. It is argued that circumcision of girls, by removing the clitoris, which is regarded as the centre of excitement, is deemed necessary for ensuring pre-marital chastity.[1] Such a statement was mentioned to the writer by the midwife in Silwa before he became aware of it in anthropological literature. The need for the control of any sexual excitability is understandable in a religiously puritanic community which considers any form of emotional stimulus, either through glance or touch, from any member of the opposite sex, other than the husband or wife, as sinful

The circumcision ceremony could be considered as a public declaration of the child's sex, with the father as socially responsible for the ceremony in the case of his son, while the mother and her female relatives solely attend to it in the case of the daughter. In other words it provides a social emphasis on the child's alignment with its sex group. The distinction between male and female circumcision is reflected in Classical Arabic by the use of two different words—'khatan' for the boy, and 'khafd' for the girl. In the colloquial language of the village, circumcision of the boy is sometimes referred to as 'cutting his pigeon' while in the case of a girl it is described as 'cutting her cockscomb' The operation is not suddenly performed on the child, but the mother, especially in the case of her son, may attempt to prepare him gradually for the event by caressing his organ and playfully endeavouring to separate the foreskin from the glans. While doing this, she would hum words to the effect that what she is doing will help to make him to become a man amongst men. In a community with rigid sex dichotomy, it is not surprising to find that it is a great fright, or a source of great resentment, for a small boy to be threatened by his mother that she will circumcise him, and for the girl to be threatened to be circumcised by the father. Such a threat by a parent of the opposite sex to the child is considered by the parents as one of the most dire threats that can be uttered, and it is thus used to help the child in identifying himself with the parent of his own sex.

[1] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Article on 'Circumcision', p. 666.

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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. *Naven*, p. 220.

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fact that the mother, in taking the child to the Nile, throws his foreskin, enclosed in a loaf of bread, into the water, and washes the 'mirwad' (antimony stick) used in the operation in the waters of the Nile. This relationship is also evidenced by the fact that circumcision, like weaning, should take place at least two or three days before the appearance of the new moon, otherwise the child is liable to be 'tied up' (mushahir), the consequence of which may be that the wound might not heal quickly, or that the child might eventually be sterile.

Children show great interest in the circumcision ceremony, as it is a great occasion in which they associate with the circumcised child, eat with him, enjoy themselves, inviting people for the ceremony, or going on the children's round with their palm-tree branches, or getting sweets and peanuts during the procession. They usually tell you of the good food they had or the new clothes they wore on the occasion of their younger sibling's or cousin's circumcision. On asking some of the schoolchildren about events during which they felt happy, they invariably gave the answer of a sibling's circumcision or marriage. The educative significance of the ceremony for the older children, who witness and attend this public celebration, though indirect, is quite obvious. The social norms based on mutual obligations, the meaning of kinship and family solidarity, are concomitant in the ritual ceremony.

One cannot discuss circumcision without reference to the psychoanalytical explanation of the ritual. Freud sees in it the castration complex, which is derived from the Oedipus situation. He states that in some primitive societies circumcision is common and is performed at the age of initiation into manhood, and it was only as a secondary development that it was transferred to the early years of life. He continues: 'It is of great interest to find that among primitive peoples, circumcision is combined with cutting the hair, and knocking out of teeth, or is replaced by them, and that our children, who cannot possibly have any knowledge of this, in fact, treat these two operations, in the anxiety with which they react to them, as equivalents of castration.'[1] In Silwa such an anxiety concerning castration is évident in the adults' threatening their children to re-circumcise them even if they are already circumcised, and it manifested itself in one of the children's dreams described later.[2]

Some psycho-analysts maintain that circumcision, as an initiating ceremony of the child by his elders, helps to conduct the growing children across those difficult thresholds of life transformations that demand change in the patterns, not only of conscious, but also of unconscious life.[3] Géza Roheim maintains that circumcision represents a process of the child's growth from the passive Oedipus situation to the active orientation towards the loved object. 'The period of life which conditions the transition from

[1] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, footnote, p. 133. [2] See Appendix XI.
[3] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series, New York, 1949, p. 10.

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852 mother to wife is dramatized. It is subject to operations: it is represented in symbols.'[1] The circumcision ritual, as practised in Silwa, lends itself to a considerable degree to Roheim's explanation, especially when one remembers such rituals as the disposing of the foreskin by putting it in a hole in a loaf of bread, the cleansing of the antimony stick in the Nile, the going round of the boys, holding the long palm-tree sticks in their hands, the admonition to the circumcised boy not to show his penis to anyone but his mother before it heals, as well as the other beliefs connected with fertility.

Sociologists, however, cannot be satisfied with such explanations. Viewed as an element in the totality of the cultural situation the 'castration' problem cannot be fully understood in the orthodox Freudian connotation with its biological bias. A sociological interpretation has to include the questions: Why does a child who is considered to be circumcised by 'angels' have to undergo the ceremony? Why is such an operation dramatized on such an elaborate social occasion? Indeed such a ceremony telescopes the individual's development as a process in which he is caught up in a net of reciprocal social obligations infused with moral and religious sanctions. Considering 'castration' in the context of social organization in Silwa, and as the villagers view it, it must be regarded as a social occasion with a religious sanction for declaring publicly the alignment of the child to his sex group. Thus, the child would identify itself with the social role of father or mother by becoming aware of the social implications and consequences of behaviour relevant to its sex group. The community submits its children to an operation around which everything is done to heighten the moral and social temperature of its culture and to induce a state of nervous super-excitation through which the youngsters may receive the adult's indelible stamp.[2]

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[1] Géza Roheim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream*, p. 18.
[2] See Edwin W. Smith, 'Indigenous Education in Africa', in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*; and B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London, 1927.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

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he did not play games at all. Boys and girls become 'muaddab' if they do not mix in play after the age of eleven or twelve. After the age of twelve, a girl would be considered 'muaddab' if she drops her glance and keeps clear of male gatherings, and when she becomes older, covers part of her face if she is passing by a group of men. A boy is 'muaddab' if he recognizes that he should sit in the back row on going to the mosque. As Mahmoud put it, a disciplined boy or girl is one who knows when and where to sit and stand, where and when to put his or her feet and thus become 'Ibn halal' (literally 'heir to the permissible'). Ali, on the other hand, expressed the importance of 'giving adab' to children by saying that it is believed that one of the signs of the end of this world will be when discipline and modesty (adab wa haya) disappear from the acts and deeds of the people.

The keynote to the educational process is the eagerness of the adults to create a docile attitude in their children and thus make them acquire filial piety.[1] The children readily accept the authority of their seniors, whether in work or play, and they endeavour to avoid their anger. This ready acceptance of the authority of those older than the child is epitomized in the axiom: 'He who is one day older than you, is in fact wiser by one year', which is a common saying often repeated by adolescent boys and girls. A child of twelve told me that it was always better to avoid the outbursts of one's elders: one of their curses might receive a hearing from God.

The ideal norm of 'adab' is a value which also has its religious sanction, as a pious son (ibn salih) is synonymous with 'muaddab'. Such a value does not only include the child's economic services and his observance of the expected social behaviour, but also implies a pattern of reciprocity between child and family. A father who neglects the care of his 'polite' children may be frequently exposed to illness, failure of crop, or death of cattle. Moreover, a family that infringes on the moral and religious code may consequently have sickly children. This connection between the moral values and the welfare of the family could be illustrated by the children's swearing by their parents' life and honour.[2] One also hears from the villagers that a loss of a son, or a camel, or sudden illness, is caused by the dealing of the inflicted person in usury, his swearing untruthfully by the name of Allah or his children, his giving false evidence in court, or spreading malicious gossip. It is clear that the welfare of the family members, children as well as adults, is contingent on some basic reciprocal relations fused with moral and religious sanctions.[3]

Besides learning from their parents and elders, children also learn

[1] M. Fortes maintains that filial piety, in patrilineal societies, is a value counteracting the suppressed antagonism between father and son, and mother and daughter. *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, p. 347.

[2] A father may swear 'by the neck' of his son where life is supposed to be located.

[3] See Chapter III for religious justification of offspring.

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neighbourhood wrangling for some time. In this case, boys who have been sneaking are referred to by other boys as 'women', or in the case of girls are branded as 'loose' or 'prostitutes'. Parents' advice to their children is, 'Hit back him who hits you'.

Thus, before adolescence, a boy, not only through overhearing the gossip of his elders, but also through his age group norms, becomes aware of the significance of gossip as a means of social control. He is perhaps the cause of gossip or included in it, and this would expose him to shaming or avoidance by other children. The boy's friends might not speak to him and this would make him stand exposed and isolated.

Thus, it is obvious that though any signs of children's aggression towards adults is tabooed and punishable, their expression of hostility towards their age-mates is given full play. Rivalry and competition are mainly directed both in the adult and in the child world towards equals. Rivalry between generations seldom occurs, as it is mainly horizontal and not vertical.

The cultural axiom is for the adult to give and for the young to receive: to accept aid in kind or money from one's elders is permissible, while the reverse would be humiliating, or at least embarrassing, unless prescribed by kinship obligations, such as aid rendered by the son to his father in old age.

There is a vivid contrast between the lively, free, and rough behaviour of children in their groups and their shy and diffident manners when they are attending grown-ups, while eating or during any celebration in the house. On being punished or rebuked by his elders, the child is expected to obey, while if he shows any submissiveness, if wronged by his 'pals', he would be punished by his parents and would be asked to retaliate for himself. A boy was called Abdu the Batil (the coward) by his pals, a name for which he seemed to have no outward resentment. On asking the boy about how he got this nickname, he told me that his father had applied the name to him and told the other boys with whom he associated to call him so, as his father was annoyed by his constant appeals to his parents to protect him from other children.

After reviewing the general atmosphere of the two educative spheres in the child's life, it is appropriate to discuss the means by which some social norms are impressed on him. As mentioned earlier, one of the cardinal virtues of a disciplined child is his respect for his elders. Till the age of four or five, this respect expresses itself in the young boy, on being introduced to a gathering in the house, touching the older person's hands with his lips and forehead. When the child grows older, this is replaced by a handshake followed immediately by his withdrawal from the adult gathering. The sign of respect by kissing the older person's hand with one's lips and forehead, although it ceases to apply amongst village people themselves, would still be practised by older boys and adults towards strangers visiting the house. Moreover, this is always the sign of respect for

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867 a son meeting his father after a long absence, as well as the greeting of adults for religious men and those who are believed to be endowed with 'baraka'—holiness.

Whilst in the first five or six years the child's respect for its parents and elders is inculcated mainly through physical gestures and intimacy, the respect later on is expected in terms of a decrease in word intimacy and physical proximity. Moreover, certain manners must be observed, such as walking behind the father or an elder and not abreast of him, standing up or at least sitting properly on the ground on his approach, dismounting from donkey-back on seeing the father in a formal gathering, and so on. Whether in attending to the hand-washing of guests, the distribution of tea amongst them, or in shaking hands with them, a fairly definite order of precedence is observed by the child and even by adults themselves. On the whole, with the progress of the child in age, details of etiquette are gradually enforced upon him. It is also interesting to note in this respect that a father when taking his son of four or five years to the field, would make him ride behind him and not in front, and one cannot argue that this is merely a matter of convenience as fathers who take their sons in front of them are considered to be spoiling them.

It is important here to distinguish between two categories of behaviour with regard to respect relationships, and this distinction is mainly related to whether there are any outsiders or public onlookers. The child, for instance, is allowed a certain amount of latitude in conforming to the external tokens of respect to its parents in the intimate circle of the family, for example, to sit on the bed while the father is sitting on the ground, to make himself a nuisance with the mother, or to hit back when she scolds him. Yet this is severely disapproved of and punished if there is a visitor in the house, or if done outside the house. This is the root of the absolute bonds of kinship behaviour on formal occasions. No plea could absolve the person from not fulfilling his obligations towards his relatives on public occasions such as mourning or exchange of gifts on ceremonial occasions. The failure to fulfil such obligations, as the villagers put it, 'makes a special history for the person'. The distinction between formal and informal behaviour gradually recedes as the child grows older and he is supposed to approach progressively for all occasions the formal expectations of behaviour.[1]

593 The general pattern of behaviour between the child and its elders is thus largely one of dominance, submission couched in the term 'filial piety'. The filial sentiment, however, is not taught to or expressed by the child in any sentimental phrases. It was a great joke amongst the children [369] in one neighbourhood to repeat statements of an urban child whom they heard saying 'I love my father, I love my mother'. Such open expressions

[1] R. Firth distinguishes between formal and informal behaviour. In the latter there are more individual differences and variations; while the former is enjoined upon each member of the society and the observance and fulfilment of formal behaviour is regarded as the sure test for the harmonious functioning of society. *We, the Tikopia*, p. 173.

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of filial sentiment are considered by the children as one of the ways in which Cairo people spoil their sons and daughters. Children's respect for and devotion to parents must be absolute and unconditional and do not have to be verbalized. Yet, on the other hand, the appeal to please the mother or father is usually invoked to persuade the child to behave properly or to perform certain duties. 'Fetch fuel for mother so that she can say that her daughter is good.' 'Wear this garment so that uncle's people will say they have a good boy.' While the affection of blood relatives is used to stimulate and motivate the child, he is not expected to express his sentiment towards them directly.

During early childhood, kinship terms are learnt, and by the age of five, the children I spoke to were quite capable of telling the categories of paternal uncle and aunt, maternal uncle and aunt, cousins and nephews and nieces. As anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out, the child does not start off in life with a full set of kinship terms, but gradually, and not without difficulty, fits itself into the framework provided for it by its elders.[1] During its development, contacts and associations, a child begins to know what type of behaviour and sentiment is expected from him towards different relatives. In terms of behaviour the above-mentioned children distinguished between those closely-related children with whom they could play freely, more co-operatively, and possibly with more superficial wrangling, and those with whom they could not play in the same way; between those from whom they could demand a piece of bread or a bit of onion, and those from whom they could not; between those who could, without suspecting malicious intentions, accept their curses and those who would resent such curses. They also knew that their close relatives are those by whom they can be protected or punished, and whom they fear and love, and to whose houses they can stray, accepting food without fear of being punished by the parents. One of the children told me that his mother punished him for going with another boy to the latter's house. She rebuked him by saying that those who offered him food would call him a son of beggars, and that it would have been quite different had he gone to his grandfather's people. Children who stray quite often into houses which are not those of close relatives, are sometimes dubbed by their elders as paupers ('fakeers', who roam about and knock at the gate of Allah). Such an excuse is given by the elders to avoid the sense of shame that their children might bring to them. In this way a child is made to learn the difference between the easy flow of mutual obligations between close relatives and the strain of accepting hospitality from distant people which is considered almost as a debt. On such occasions, one also sees the importance of parental obligations towards their children, whose hunger would reflect on their parental duties and prestige.[2]

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 171.

[2] For such connection between hunger and prestige, see Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Society*, pp. 43–4.

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867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: [601] father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [585] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [600] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [504] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

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as 'you are the son of people who are like princes', and this type of praise is more common than that related to the good qualities of the child himself. In this way, the identification with, and submergence into, the family is impressed upon the child. It is not surprising that on asking many young children about their names, their immediate answer was 'I am the son of so-and-so'. If the identity of the children is enquired about by the villagers, the question is normally formulated as 'Whose son are you?' It is noticeable that identification there goes with a sense of pride in one's family which causes wrangling and quarrelling amongst children as well as adults. The following conversation is typical of children's altercations in this connection. One child said: 'My father is better than yours; he never worked for someone else, and his turban has always been white. My people (our in Arabic) are all leaders (Arab sheikhs)'. The other boy retorted: 'All your people are liars and deceivers. We offer a larger tray of food for guests and on funeral occasions than yours. Your cow is "rotting" and its bones are sticking out from starvation. What is the use of just talking?'[1]

At an early age the child acquires the sense of property and becomes interested in possessions. Many uncles, or grandparents, for example, give presents to the children. Such a practice also forms the basis of one of the cardinal interests of children in animals. On my entering a house, a child insisted on showing me his goat, which his grandfather had sent him as a gift on the occasion of his circumcision. Sometimes parents may allocate a young calf or sheep to a boy, and in the case of a girl, a mother might keep a certain chicken or duck.[2] This is regarded as the child's own property, 'ala zimmatuh' or 'ala bakhtu', to be kept 'for his sake and luck', and consequently, at least theoretically, the parents do not dispose of the animal except for his or her benefit, e.g. to clothe him or her, or to buy things for him or her, or in the case of killing the animal or the chicken, the child would get the lion's share of the meat. In practice, however, under the pressure of hardship, the parents would more often sell the animal or give it away for their own account.

It is not difficult to see that the main objective of child training is to cultivate a docile and yielding disposition in the child as the main characteristic of a 'muaddab'. For the attainment of such a goal, the motive of fear is very much worked upon in the training of children by their elders during the period of childhood. Parents usually resort to making the child conform to their wishes by frightening it with an imaginary creature called 'silowa'. There is hardly any young child who does not fear this chimera which is supposed to eat children, especially at night. It is held by children that 'silowa' is a huge, ferocious animal that eats its young after suckling

[1] A. Tannous remarked that in the village community of Lebanon, swearing in mild cases usually refers to strictly personal characteristics, whereas in intense conflicts, more violent terms, usually involving the family, are used. See his article 'Group Behaviour in the Village Community of Lebanon', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1942, pp. 921–39.

[2] Such a chicken is usually marked by a thread tied round its leg or by cutting one of its claws.

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865 wrangle and quarrel with her, are rude to her, run outside the house and throw stones at the door or climb the wall and swear at her. On the other hand, children feel that the mother is their most reliable source of care 861 and affection, and that she is more accessible and amenable than the 593 father. In this capacity she is the one usually approached for expressing their wishes or asked to mediate between them and the father. Mothers themselves recognize that their treatment of children is different from that of the father. This is epitomized in the mothers' popular saying to their children in persuading them to obey them: 'On the death of my father I eat dates; on the death of my mother I eat hot coal.' In this way the mother tries to win from her offspring assistance and service as she is not invested with the same power of authority as the father. On the other hand, withdrawal from the father, keeping away from his bed while he [867] is asleep, and keeping quiet while he is about the house, is told and retold to children by the mother or older siblings for fear of punishment. The father's authority cannot be flouted; and a change in the tone of his voice must be seriously considered. Although his punishment might be less frequent than that of the mother, yet it is certainly more severely administered. While the former pinches the ear, or the thigh, and seldom slaps, the latter normally slaps and thrashes with a rope or a cane.

861 It is also worth noting here that very little chance is given to the child to justify his misdemeanour, and hardly any effort is made to persuade him to avoid falling into the same error. Moreover, in administering punishment, there is no consistency or regularity; for the same offence the child might be beaten harshly, or his offence allowed to pass unnoticed. This depends, of course, on the parents' mood, or on their feeling towards the child at that particular time.

579 Such methods for disciplining the child normally lead to the child's attempts to tell lies or go for things in a roundabout way to evade punishment. He would swear that he has not committed a fault and that it is someone else who is responsible for it, or that he was forced by older or [859] stronger boys to do it.[1] Deceptive tricks are frequently adopted in games when, for instance, a boy tries to frighten another boy by saying that the latter's father is approaching with a stick and thus seek to compel him to leave the game. An older boy, in trying to deceive younger children, would run in front of them shouting in terror, 'The Silowa is coming, the Silowa is coming', and the young boys would disperse. One boy might tell a group of boys an untrue story, and if the teller succeeds in making his listeners 'swallow' it he would vaunt his triumph over them by saying, 'I've been telling lies. I've cut your ears off—Kaddabt 'alaikum, gattat wadanaikum.'

[1] It is interesting to note that in the Kuttab (Koran school), Kuttab sheikh enquires from one of the boys about his misdemeanour and the other boys volunteer without being asked to give evidence confirming the boy's offence. With this also goes constant attempts of children to correct each other's behaviour or ways of learning or attention.

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each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'.

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity.

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'.

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes.

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

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become a great asset in house tasks; for instance, as 'fuel fetchers'. Most of the fuel in the form of maize straw, tree branches and manure is stacked on the roof, and boys are expected to help their mothers in bringing down the fuel stores into the house whenever needed.

The third feature that emerges from the children's play in the village is the social significance of age. As mentioned in the description of games, the leaders are invariably chosen on an age-basis. In any game, the older boys are the senior boys, unless joined later by boys who are older still and who are entitled to take over the role of leadership. Age, as the basis of seniority, is recognised by children even at the age of five and six, where the selection of the leaders amongst this age level occasions most of the quarrels which occur. In case of disagreement as to who is the oldest boy, this is sometimes decided by height. If this brings further disagreement, the problem is referred to an older boy, who is expected to know their relative ages. Furthermore, if any boy goes complaining to his mother on any account when playing, the first question she asks him is whether the child who hit him is older than he. If so she stands by her child, otherwise she straight away tells him, 'He is your age. Go and hit him, you coward.' The shaming would be worse if the offender happens to be younger. 857* 867 501

It is also worth repeating that the two teams playing are usually balanced by the pairing up of 'equals' (nadid) which actually means 'of the same age' in the children's language. Failing to achieve that, two young boys may be given two or even three turns, if the other team has an older boy to match them. Players are usually reminded by the leaders of how well their opposite number is playing on the other side. Throughout organized or unorganized games, children are always encouraged to face the clash of 'equals' as an important experience in life.

Another important social norm reflected in play procedures is the respect that is shown to the leaders in directing the games, and the power enjoyed by them. They settle the disputes and smooth misunderstandings that occur during the game. They have to stand up to the inevitable latecomer who threatens to break up the game if not admitted. In this respect, it is also worth pointing out that they are seldom involved in the penalties that result from losing. For instance, in most of the games described they do not take part in the humiliating 'donkey-ride' which applies only to their team. 857* 867

The last feature in our sociological analysis is the place for play. For children of all ages play always takes place outside the dwelling house. When a child starts playing in the house, the normal reaction on the part of the mother, father or any older member of the family is to expel him from the house, as if play, by its nature, should be indulged in beyond the dwelling premises. While such a reaction may be attributed in some measure to the fact that children might break things or create undue disturbance, the substantial reason is that the house is a place for work, and for the carrying out of serious domestic, social, and economic tasks. The notion 857*

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'latency' or repression of sexuality as reported by psycho-analysts.[1] On the contrary, till the ages of ten and eleven children give full swing to their rough and vulgar ways of talk in their games. Even if the period of latency is universal according to psycho-analysts, its layer of repression amongst Silwa boys during this stage is not more than skin-deep. This contrasts with girls' play where phrases or symbols of sexuality are hardly expressed. The difference is certainly a reflection of the social norms governing sex, and exerts pressure on girls earlier than on boys.

Looking at the play and games of boys in the general cultural context and the trends of process of growing up, their characteristic roughness and sexuality could be regarded as a reflection of the expressive and assertive way of dealing with equals in competitive situations. Moreover, it could also be regarded as the last fling of the children's group before the adult world makes them toe the line in the stage of adolescence. Perhaps in their resentment of the pressures of socialization, the children's group finds a healthy scope for letting off steam in their own play-life unsupervised and undirected by the requirements of their grown-ups. It is relevant to state here that free unorganized play amongst children is mainly characterized either by mimicking other children or ridiculing adults with physical deformities, especially the lame and the blind. In such ways children give vent to their feelings of aggression towards, and resentment of, the adults' world. In this way one can see that the roughness in the boys' games may be regarded as a safety-valve by which the pressures of adult authority are vented and thus relieved.

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It is to be asked to what extent the environment and the cultural conditions of the community determine, or at least predispose, the boys and girls in the village to maintain and appreciate the games they play. It cannot be mere accident that most of the games, especially boys' games, although co-operative within the team, are directed mainly in their execution towards a highly competitive goal. While it cannot be firmly established, there is a strong suggestion that the village's social structure, with the solidarity of family, clan, and division combined with the rivalry between the various families, clans and the two divisions, favours the adoption of such games.

Moreover, it is appropriate to ask to what extent maleness is connected with these boys' games in the sense that through the tough and rugged manner of play, boys gain their manly skill and endurance. In other words, to what extent can one consider these games as ways of testing boys' ability to take their part in the community which requires a demonstration of manhood by showing one's prowess in the games? With this, one also notices the quiet nature of the girls' games which is compatible with the female ethos in this community.

[1] G. Roheim, 'The Psycho-analysis of Primitive Cultural Types,' in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. XIII.

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reluctantly admits the value of story-telling to children, accepts its occurrence at night as a safety valve, as then it would not wreck or endanger the 'puritanic' atmosphere.[1] 857* 538

The first eleven stories recorded in this study are a common stock for most of the boys and girls in the village, but I found no girl who knew any of the rest of the stories. This is understandable, as these stories are usually related and heard by boys and girls till the age of eleven or twelve, but after this age story-telling among girls is frowned upon and punished. This is the main reason why their stock of tales is meagre compared with that of the boys. Here, as in play, girls are expected to toe the line of adults earlier than boys. 857* 539

Most of the stories collected were from the compulsory school children. By no means all of them knew the full text of the stories, but most of them at least recognized or felt they knew the first eleven stories. In examining those who had known some of the stories, they repeated them in an almost identical way.

Children normally begin their narration of a story by saying: 'There existed' (Feeh), whereupon the listeners reply, 'God exists' (Allah feeh); older boys and old men would normally begin by, 'It happened and in the past many a thing happened, and upon God we rely' (Kan ya ma kan, wa 'ala allah attuklan).[2] The younger boys finish off by exclaiming, 'I've been to your house and come back, I've eaten the hen before the cock' (Ruht 'indakum wi jeet, akalt al farkha gabl addik).

In the text of the stories and tales, one can find reflections of many of the social, moral and religious norms and attitudes. In the manifest content of the stories, such norms and attitudes as those governing the relationships between members of the family, social expectations, religious aspirations and desire for children are not difficult to discern and need no elaboration. [87]

Moreover, anthropologists and psychologists have also tried to explain the latent content of folk literature, myth and legends. The interpretations of Freudian, Jungian, and other schools of psychology have been occasionally alluded to in the footnotes of the story texts.[3] The orthodox Freudians, as well as the Jungians, because of their racial and generalized interpreta-

[1] With regard to the fact that folk-stories are characteristically told at night, Hermant advances the theory that the choice of night is psychologically significant as after the day's work is finished and both narrator and listeners are tired, their critical powers of thinking, their attention and will are slackened. Thus social activities that are considered inappropriate during the day seem acceptable at night; in the same way certain themes in stories are exclusively acceptable during the evenings, and are incorporated in the folk-tale. See E. J. Lindgren, 'The Collection and Analysis of Folk-Lore', in *The Study of Society*, p. 360.

[2] This beginning is very similar to the way story-tellers in Iraq introduce their stories, as reported by E. S. Stevens, although by omitting 'ya' he misunderstood the meaning of the phrase and translated it as 'There was, there was not'. *Tales of Iraq*, London, 1931.

[3] C. G. Jung and C. Kerenyi, *An Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (translated by R. F. C. Hull), London, 1951.

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution. [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

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883 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic
868 tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the
554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks
857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

FROM THREE TO SEVEN

Boys

No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being [312] less embarrassed, less inquisitive, and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.

[372] In the absence of older sisters he takes care of his younger brother or sister.

[241] Towards the end of this period he goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.

Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.

[868] On the whole for him this is a stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.

Girls

Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.

Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.

Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.

Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.

Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

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FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [315] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [281]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [231]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [312] [312]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-dressing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [265]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children.

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Chapter Six

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

In this chapter it is intended to outline the procedures and methods that are adopted in this community to inculcate the norms that transform the child, who is relatively peripheral, into the adult who is the central link in village social life. The transition can be considered, as Fortes puts it, as one 'from an economically passive burden into a producer, from a biological unit into a social personality, irretrievably cast in the habits, disposition, and notions characteristic of his culture'.[1] Fortes has also provided the writer with certain insight in evaluating the learning process as a by-product of the cultural routine, a phenomenon which obtains in the village community. It is obvious that in Silwa the education of children is not surrounded, as in some primitive societies, with ceremonies of initiation, elaborate ritual, or narration of totemic myths. Learning accrues mainly through children's observing, imitating and assisting their adults in their everyday activities. For the villagers express the educational process through emphasizing life and time as the most important educational agencies which mould and influence the character, and provide the experience. The difference between an adult and a child is, on the whole, quantitative rather than qualitative. The former knows and thus conforms to the cultural norms, while the latter does not. The commonly used word is not the classical word 'tifl' (infant) but another word which is also classical but literally means 'ignorant' (jahil)—and thus identifies ignorance with childhood. It is because of this ignorance of expected skills, norms and attitudes that the children are considered inferior to the adult, and the younger as subservient to the elder.

Here socialization is to include its two aspects of technical training and cultural or regulatory training.[2] In Chapter I it was shown how a boy or a girl is progressively introduced to the economic pursuits of adults, and what skills were expected of them at successive stages of their growth. It was also emphasised how the child was expected to take over from his

[1] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 6.
[2] See Introduction.

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father or his elder brother (or mother or elder sister) those tasks which he or she is capable of doing. The child must work for his family as a necessary requisite to enjoying their protection. This is made explicit to children by parents who, on seeing their negligent children enjoying their food, would rebuke them by saying, 'Yes, you only know how to eat and drink', or 'You know how to increase the size of your buttocks'. There is nothing to add here concerning technical training, and further reference will be made in connection with its relation to cultural training. The lack of mastery in skills required from boys at a particular age is attributed to inefficient training by the parents. Once in the fields I heard a father blaming his son for his inability to get the right fodder for the cow by saying, 'The fault is not yours; it is the fault of him who has brought you up'.

The process of growing up is envisaged as a way of disciplining the child to conform to the adults' standards, and to comply with what their elders expect them to do, thus acquiring the qualities of being polite—'muaddab'. In adult eyes, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and childhood activities, especially play, are a waste of time. The 'giving of adab' to children is the guarantee of the survival of the social structure, with its patrilineal bias and respect relationships, especially filial piety, which is sanctioned by the Koranic injunctions. To become 'muaddab' is the ideal set up by parents for their children, and the adherence to which is constantly impressed upon them. The ideal, although emphasizing subservience and obedience of the children to their parents, is actually extended to include the whole range of children's activities for which their elders are responsible. The adult sense of keenness to bring their children to realize this ideal can be traced in parents' prayers that God might not make their children disobedient or cause them shame. One of the most effective insults to a boy or a girl is the provoking remark that he or she has no people to discipline him or her. 'She is a divorced girl' or 'unrestrained'; or for a boy, 'he is a pushing boy' (literally 'ascending'). Such comments are addressed to young persons who show no respect to people of their parents' age or who transgress the limits of behaviour expected from their age or sex group, e.g. a boy walking through a gathering of men, a married man insulting his father, a girl shouting from the roof of the house while fetching fuel, or a girl caught entering the guest house.[1]

The acquiring of the procedures of 'adab', which incorporate the prescribed standards of behaviour, has also a religious sanction behind it from the prophetic tradition. It is related that the Prophet said, 'God has disciplined me, and has perfected my discipline'. The word 'muaddab' is applied to a child who defaecates outside the house at the age of three or four, and goes further and further away from the house as he grows older. After the age of ten, for instance, he is not considered 'muaddab' unless he covers his genitals while urinating. A boy of fourteen to sixteen would be 'muaddab' if he played in the evenings only, and still better, if

[1] Use of the guest house is restricted to males.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 560 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [860] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are un- [744] methodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the 323
oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*balālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely 415
hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such 323
as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ballāṣ*, is placed 323
in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ballāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *balālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to 868
become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it 323
from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled 463
in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the 323
houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well 343
mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay 251
lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed 343
with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them [194]
are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman 5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

THE wealth and prosperity of Egypt is, and always has been, 101
dependent upon the produce of the soil, and the peasants are before everything else agriculturalists, as is also indicated by the Egyptian Arabic word for peasant—*fellāḥ* (plural *fellāḥīn*), meaning one who digs or tills. The peasants, most of whom are 241
quite illiterate, are remarkably clever agriculturalists, and every 868
young boy is well versed in all that pertains to the cultivation of 312
the soil. Their methods are, for the most part, very primitive, 177
though, of course, the present system of storing water and of distributing it over various districts has been adopted comparatively recently, and to maintain it a number of highly trained engineers are required. This book is not concerned with these modern develop- 121
ments, which, indeed, lie beyond the scope of anthropology, but 241
with the ordinary work in the fields, where ancient methods and ancient implements are still largely employed, and ancient customs are still observed.

The cultivated lands in Egypt lie along either bank of the river, 131
without any apparent boundaries, for there are no hedges to divide 423
the fields as in England. To the eye of the ordinary traveller there 241
is nothing to indicate where one man's property ends and another's 312
begins. The fields are broken up into small squares, separated from each other by ridges of earth and narrow trenches. When water is distributed over a given area it is conducted through the trenches into the square plots by making an opening through the ridges which surround them. When the plots have received their due allowance of water the openings are built up again and the stream is directed to another portion of the land.

The greater number of the peasants own or hire small plots 423
which are marked off one from the other by boundary stones stuck 427
into the ground at intervals of six feet or more. Many a village quarrel has arisen over these stones, the removal of a neighbour's 598
landmark being a constant cause of disturbance. If a man, for 665

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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them for some time. Boys and girls between the ages of four and seven are often heard talking about the 'silowa' roaming through the village at night on its way from the hills to its nightly drink from the Nile. The 'ghool' is another imaginary beast, with a huge and hairy body, to whose attacks the children are exposed during their sleep. Other ferocious animals, such as dogs and wolves, are also invoked by mothers to induce the child to come home early or to accept food.[1]

Some of the children's games concern themselves with the establishment of a hierarchy in the order of fears. A child would move his fingers in front of another child's eyes, challenging him, by asking: 'Whom do you fear more, your father or God?' If the child blinks, then that indicates that he fears his father more than God. This is sometimes asked of a younger child without attempting to make him blink, merely to test his knowledge. The same puzzle is also posed in a slightly different manner. An older boy would ask a younger boy the question: 'There is a very small boy in the market whom nobody can see, do you fear him or me more?' The proper answer is expected to be 'him' as the invisible small boy in the market is supposed to signify God. In this type of guessing game, it is obvious that the children learn that fear is the symptom of recognizing the dominance of the supernatural authority of God over that of the worldly authority of the father. Moreover, children test each other through the expression of fear as to whose authority they first submit, the paternal or the maternal uncle.

The fear of sacred objects is also inculcated during the period of childhood. The child is made to believe in their blessings as well as their dangers. He is taken to a saint's tomb or wears a Koranic charm when he is ill. At the same time he is warned against urinating near a saint's tomb or running about in the cemetery for fear of incurring the saint's wrath. The same double attitude is inculcated in him with regard to bread, milk, treading on written paper, passing over ashes from the burning of a charm made by someone else, or stepping over someone's legs. Durkheim has pointed out that the sacred objects are invariably thought of as possessing the power of sanctity and danger simultaneously. Psycho-analysts have traced this cultural phenomenon to the emergence into the field of consciousness of the dual role of the mother, and the ambivalent attitude connected with it. This probably mirrors the process whereby 'good objects' such as the mother or her milk turn into 'bad objects' such as the denying and frustrating mother and faeces.[2]

[1] E. S. Stevens writes: 'The Silowa occupies much the same role in Iraki legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy tales. She is a water spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendent, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. . . . She is fond of human flesh . . . she has a partiality for human lovers.' *Folk Tales of Irak*, p. xvi, O.U.P., 1931. The classical word for 'Silowa' is 'Silah', pl. 'Saali'.

[2] George Devereux, 'Magic Substances and Narcotics of the Mohave Indians', in *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XXII, 1949, p. 115.

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT

454 It is the custom of many of the country folk to hide their money underground, either in their houses or outside, and I know of more than one very rich man who refuses to put his money in a bank, but prefers to bury it. Such people, of course, though wealthy, are entirely without education, beyond a knowledge of reading and writing. Perhaps they may confide the secret as to where the money is buried to a brother or wife, but sometimes they die without telling anyone where it is concealed. I have been told by one or two officials that such stores of money have been accidentally discovered from time to time, and these discoveries are quite enough to account for the large number of stories about hidden treasure which are current all over the country.

[87]

754 As I have already stated, and as I propose to show in the following paragraphs, the magicians' powers are sometimes employed for sinister purposes.

If a man wants to make his wife hate him so that he may easily divorce her he calls in the aid of a magician, who will proceed as follows. He takes an egg which was laid on a Wednesday, and on the shell of it he writes certain magic letters, which are supposed to form the name of the King of the Tombs. He then takes the egg and buries it in a tomb, but on no account must anyone know which tomb it is. For Christians it would be the tomb of a Christian, for Muslims that of a Muslim. By the time that the magician has returned from depositing the egg in its hiding-place the charm has already begun to work. The egg must always be left where he placed it. Should anyone discover its secret hiding-place and remove it the charm loses its effect, and the woman would again love her husband.

If a man wishes to procure the death of a man whom he regards as his enemy he will go to a magician, who acts in the following way. He takes a hen and kills it, keeping the blood in some vessel. He then obtains an egg laid by a hen that has black feathers only, and on it he writes this magic square (Fig. 116) with the blood of the hen he has killed. He burns some incense, holding the egg over the fumes, with the inscribed side downward, repeating the following incantation three times: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. By the Name of God, the Mighty King and Majesty. Possessor of Possessions, the Throne and Seat, the Heavens and Earth. Blessed be God, Lord of the World, Lord of all power and transcendent might. Light of Light and Spirit of Spirits. All Glorious, Holy Lord of Angels and the Spirit, praise

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1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [312] [482]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [23]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [23]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [8] [37]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [482]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [34]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing. [515]

Wool spinning and yarning.

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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One cannot fail to notice that both children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 18.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Makkadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt*.
[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1181, May 1906.
[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

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'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the preix of 'Sheikh'.

In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); Az-Zarnuji, *Ta 'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta 'allum* (translated by C. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

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Chapter Eleven

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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AFTER reviewing the indigenous aims and methods of learning and teaching, we turn now to the modern system of schooling which has affected the village as a result of the national educational policy. This type of schooling is represented in the two schools of the village, the compulsory and the primary school.

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The compulsory school was established by the Provincial Council in 1925. In discussing the village compulsory school one must inevitably touch on educational problems at the national level. Compulsory schools were established to meet the long-felt need for mass literacy. The 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls. Accordingly the Ministry of Education planned to put this article into effect. The Ministry's scheme rejected the Kuttab as completely inadequate to cope with the problems of illiteracy, and of no educational value. Hence, new schools, called 'compulsory schools', had to be established. The period of compulsory education was to be for five years (from seven to twelve years old) on a half-day basis. The object of this programme was to benefit the maximum number of boys and girls. The time limit for completing the programme of compulsory education by providing a place for every child and thus abolishing illiteracy was fixed as fifteen years, and was extended later to twenty years.[1] The scheme was based on the participation of the Provincial Councils with the Ministry of Education, the former to be responsible for the sites, buildings, furniture and equipment; the latter for the staffing and administration. In 1933, owing to the difficulties entailed in the previous programme, a new education bill was passed to enforce attendance between the ages of seven and twelve, thus reducing the period to five years instead of six, and still on the half-day basis. Only those who suffer from physical or mental diseases, or those who live more than two kilometres from the nearest school, are exempt. The law also stipulates that the child's parents or guardians are responsible for his education in a compulsory school, if he is not receiving education else-

[1] Al-Kabbani, *Siasat al-T'alim fi Misr*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 9–10 (Arabic).

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drawing. In towns where there are kindergartens, children who completed the three years of the kindergarten are admitted without any examination. While the elementary school has always been free, the primary school only became free since 1943. The enthusiasm for the primary school in contrast to the blind alley of the elementary school, is that it leads to secondary schools and higher education. 872

In 1948 an Education Act was passed for the unification of the elementary and primary school to provide a common school for all. The ideal implied in the Act is to bring the curriculum and equipment of the elementary school up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the latter, while the former would give more instruction in Arabic and religion. Both schools would thus lead to secondary education.

The purpose of the modern system of education, primary, secondary and higher education, as envisaged by Muhammad Ali during the first half of the nineteenth century, was to train civil servants. The national policy of education, and consequently the people themselves, has connected this type of education with government service. From that point of view, the more children who attended the school the better, thereby providing wider scope of selection of employees for the government administration. The more children went to such schools, the less they received in return. As supply overtook demand, competition forced up the requirements for government jobs and lowered the economic value of certificates and degrees. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, a primary school certificate was sufficient qualification for a government job; later candidates for the same job were obliged to produce a secondary school certificate, and later even university graduates failed to find remunerative work. 871

In spite of all this, the appeal of such schools and institutions leading, not to the 'white collar' jobs in general as in the West, but particularly to government posts, cannot be exaggerated. Mann's observation in this respect still holds: 'In no other country in the world perhaps do the professional classes and especially the civil servants enjoy such widespread prestige and admiration. Hence inevitably the enthusiasm of Egyptian parents flows irresistibly into the channels of superior education, secondary or higher. The result is that there is a continual over-pressure on the accommodation of primary and secondary schools and the higher colleges, and public opinion persistently demands a further expansion of facilities at a time when the gravest doubts have arisen in the minds of the competent authorities whether a supply of professionally trained men is not being annually produced far larger than the country can ever hope to absorb.'[1] [554]

This research had been conducted before the establishment of the primary school in Silwa, and thus may serve as a base line for the effect of such an education on the village life. From information received, the 872

[1] F. O. Mann, 'Education in Egypt', *Year Book of Education*, 1932, p. 991.

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212 This improvement is also obvious in Silwa itself: ten years ago there were two public scribes in the village to whom people would resort for letter-writing or making formal complaints, but they have had to close their establishment on not finding enough customers. The spread of literacy in Egypt has generally been made more difficult because of the difference between the colloquial and the classical Arabic, which is taught in schools. The relation of the former to the latter is almost like that of Swiss German to High German. Moreover, some reformers maintain that it takes too long with the present script for the child to become sufficiently literate, and this difficulty has prompted some Egyptian scholars to advocate a Latin script instead of the present Arab script.[1] The numerous rules of inflection, changing vowels and consonants, and the diacritical marks attached to the words according to meaning, make correct reading a tiresome task. It has often been said, and not without some measure of justification, that in European languages, one has to read in order to understand, while in Arabic, one has to understand in order to read.

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212 In Silwa, however, though people are increasingly attaching more importance to the ability to read and write, this instrument cannot be considered as a vital motivating force in their lives. The villagers' traditions can be mainly communicated orally, with a few literate persons on whom would devolve the responsibility of communicating the cultural and religious aspects requiring literacy. It is not surprising, then, that some of the villagers, especially most women, who had learnt reading and writing at a compulsory school, have almost relapsed into illiteracy. The remoteness and relative isolation of the village, along with the poverty in cultural influences such as newspapers, books, and other suitable reading material, explain to a great extent this phenomenon. The degree of literacy could be better assessed, however, from the kind of literature that is read in the village, and from the extent to which the reading ability is utilized. There are hardly any books in the village, except those few related to religious matters in one way or another. The following is a list of all the books which are acquired and read by the villagers:

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Books on Jurisprudence (fikh): *Mata Assafi, al-Ishmani, Sheik abu-al Hasan, mata Addardiri, Risalat Ibn abi-Zaid al-Kairwani, Azzurkani.*

Burdat-al-Busiri (The Mantle Ode), a hymn in praise of the Prophet.

Dalail al-Kheirat. A book read usually for propitiation, and in petitions to God.

Mata al-Jawhara in Divinity (Tawheed—Unity of God).

Manakib Assalihen (The Virtue of Pious Men).

Manakib al-Hassan wal-Hussain (The Virtues of the Prophet's Cousins).

Manakib Assayid al-Badawi.

Kasaid ahl Attarik (Poems of the Mystics).

Certain books from which texts of charms are copied.

Mawlid al-Manawi (Prophet's Life-story).

[1] A. F. Fahmy, *Latin Script for the Writing of Arabic* (Arabic), Cairo, 1944.

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Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

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One of the boys in the elementary training college is an uncle of another boy in the primary school, to which the latter was sent after his mother quarrelled with his grandmother and decided to live in a separate house. To assert her independence and prestige, she also decided to send her son to receive education in Aswan like his maternal uncle.

Here it is obvious that apart from the benefits that may be gained from such an education outside the village school, the impulse of emulation and rivalry, especially amongst kinsfolk, must be regarded as one of the strong forces that led some of these boys to be sent to school in Aswan. Moreover, except in the case of three boys, they are by no means the sons of the comparatively well-to-do people in the village. In fact, neither the Omda nor the village Sheikhs have any sons at school in Aswan.

The writer concludes this chapter with certain reflections concerning the function of modern education and the process of social change in Egypt. Many critics of this system have noted, with alarm, that the schools as they stand have outlived their function of producing government officials. The bureaucracy of the administrative machinery is already loaded. Out of a total expenditure of £43,558,884 in 1940–1, the salaries and wages of government civil servants and employees amounted to £15,799,001 or about 30 per cent; the corresponding figures for 1944 were £82,097,005 and £23,495,275 or over 20 per cent of the total State expenditure.[1]

Moreover, the effect of modern schooling is usually the alienation of the best boys in rural societies from their background, since they are only to be satisfied with a government post. One wonders what would happen to the economic productivity of the country if the expansion of education were envisaged purely in terms of the content of modern schooling.[2] The liability of the modern school products has been felt, and the irrelevance of their education has been criticized by many educationists and reformers.[3] It has been rightly stated that 'any programme for change should assess the part the school can play. For too often the school is a means of weaning the brightest boys and girls away from their local communities, when it should be more concerned with directing awakened interest to improve local conditions.'[4] As in the indigenous education of the village under study, education for social change must also take into account both the technical and the cultural aspects, and schools must

[1] *Annuaire Statistique de Poche* for 1946, p. 234.

[2] The average wheat yield in Egypt is 1,700 lb. per acre, nearly as high as that of Great Britain; corn gives the highest yield per acre in the world, while cotton, the principal export crop, yields an average of 606 lb. per acre compared with 328 in U.S. and 368 in the Soviet Union. Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[3] Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935. *Report on Educational Reform in Egypt*, Cairo, 1946.

[4] *Experiences with Human Factors in Agricultural Areas of the World*. Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1949.

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public school product, Cromer, for instance, was naturally dominated by 'the Whig tradition from which he could never unfortunately escape'.[1]

Neither in the indigenous way of training as seen in the earlier chapters nor in the literate climate of opinion in Egypt before its cultural contacts with the West, is there any distinction between vocational and liberal education. A literate man was not necessarily a person who could read and write, but one who had received moral and religious instruction, enabling him to lead the 'Good Life'. Moreover 'literate and illiterate' corresponded to 'employed and unemployed'.[2] From the writings of Ibn Taimiyah, one of the Moslem thinkers of the thirteenth century, there seems to be no distinction between education and vocation. He maintained that a vocation was one of the compulsory sciences which the community considered necessary to impart to its members. The duty of 'al-muhtasib' (the market inspector in Islamic institutions) besides inspecting the markets and the tradesmen, was to inspect the schools.

The distinction between 'culture' and 'utility' is not an intrinsic one and is based in the West on a view of a social order where human beings are divided into those who are capable of a life of intellectual pursuit and those who have to work to provide them with the necessary leisure for that pursuit.[3] Such a view has vitiated educational theory and practice for a considerable time and brought about the dualism of liberal and vocational education.[4]

[1] Lord Lloyd, *Egypt Since Cromer*, Vol. I, London, 1933, p. 161. See also S. I. Hammad, 'French and British Influences in Egyptian Education', M.A. Thesis, London, 1949 (unpublished).

[2] A. al-Jabarti, *'Ajaib al-Athar*, Vol. II, Cairo A.H., 1322, p. 214 (Arabic).

[3] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, London (1947 ed.), p. 294. See also Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture*, London, 1941. Lancelot Hogben, *Political Arithmetic*, London, 1938; *Dangerous Thoughts*, London, 1939.

[4] For a defence of pursuing knowledge for its own sake and for liberal education see Abraham Flexner, *Universities: American, English and German*, Oxford University Press, 1930. For an opposite view see Council for Curriculum Reform, *The Content of Education*, London, 1948.

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as other anthropologists, have viewed the efficacy of modern education in schools, and the problems that face the adolescent in the modern complex society. They have pointed out the gaps in modern education in the transmission of the cultural heritage, especially at the stage of adolescence, when transition from childhood dependence to adult independence is expected to take place.[1]

As far as Silwa is concerned, it has been shown how the child-training practices impress on the growing individual the social norms with certain dominant themes at different stages. It has also been noted that the child-training system reflects many of the social and psychological attitudes of adult behaviour. Attempts have been made throughout this work to discern some correlations between adult values and personality structure, and techniques of instilling children with 'adab'. Children begin to adopt some of the cultural values of the community even during childhood, e.g. assertive, aggressive, and rivalry attitudes towards other children, while there is submissive and obedient behaviour towards elders; observance of sex regulations and behaviour before puberty; the earlier attainment by girls of sociological maturity, and so on. It was also pointed out from observations, tests, dreams and Rorschach responses, that the children's flights of imagination are curbed at an early stage, thus making the children show striking interest in adult activities of farming, ceremonial celebrations, and kinship relations. The policy of child-training in Silwa sets the pattern of the social relations of individuals in their groupings, and incorporates them as well in the productive activities of the community.

Against such a background of the cultural tradition, one can draw certain conclusions. One can see the contributions that an educational institution may make in the social and economic life of a community. One can ascertain the difficulties encountered in its proper functioning. Furthermore, one can view in proper perspective the complex process which children undergo in adjusting themselves to school curriculum and its values on one hand and to the prevailing conditions of home training on the other.

Many educational thinkers have emphasized the importance of relating the school to the needs of the community. In this connection it is often assumed that elements in the educational content of a community could be transferred easily with benefit to the school curricula, providing stimulation, and provoking the interest of the learners. Such assumptions often ignore the new situation which has arisen out of the cultural contacts. Those who are thinking in such ways wishfully hope to recreate the past; but in their zeal they tend to ignore the basis of the community's educative forces.[2] In this community, for example, the inclusion in a reading book of some of the local fairy tales, or the inclusion of some of the children's games in the school, would be considered facetious and undignified by

[1] Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea*.
[2] See M. Read, review of Gladwyn M. Childs' book referred to earlier.

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both children and adults. A faith in the practical subjects and in their educative value would be met with reticence in such a community. For such practical skills are considered to be of lower social status than farming; they are judged to be subjects unsuitable for inclusion in the school programme, as their acquisition occurs as a by-product of observation and routine.

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Studies of this type based on the functional approach towards the place of the school in its social setting are proving to be valuable guides to educational reconstruction. They also provide a buffer through their pragmatic analysis, against the various winds of educational doctrine which sometimes beat upon educational theory and practice with the force of a gale.

Sociological studies have also contributed to the modification of many generalizations about the social and psychological development of *the* child or *the* adolescent. It is becoming increasingly apparent that no study can make sweeping generalizations about the child or the adolescent, as we have always to ask questions about the conditioning factors, e.g. the home and environmental background; or, in a modern community, the class to which the child belongs. An American sociologist maintains that in American education, 'the ineffectiveness of middle-class sanctions upon the great masses of lower-class children is the crucial dilemma of our thoroughly middle-class teachers and school systems. Thus lower-class children remain "unsocialized" and "unmotivated" from the middle-class point of view.'[1]

If one talks in general terms about the development of children's imagination, the stages when they become capable of responding to authority, or of assuming responsibility, and about the conflicts of personal adjustment, he is denying the conditioning effect of social forces which play a potent part in the quality of the individual's development and in his social adjustment. Adult attitudes and expectations must be taken into consideration. It has been shown in this study how, in Silwa as among the Manus, children are almost completely deprived of imaginative potentialities and are very matter-of-fact at a very early stage. Children do not tinker with adult themes of life in their play as preparation for their future life.

To expect that certain characteristics of child development are absolute, irrespective of the adult world, would be to ignore the strength of the cultural tradition.[2] The study of the 'psychology of child development' must be contingent on that of the 'sociology of child development'.[3] The Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago main-

[1] Allison Davis and Robert Havighurst, 'Social Class and Colour Differences in Child-Rearing', in *Personality in Nature Society and Culture*, p. 263. See also their book, *Father of the Man*, Boston, 1947, pp. 10–11.

[2] M. Mead, *Growing Up*, pp. 267–8.

[3] An interesting example of research in the sociology of child development is a field study of social influence in groups of children by R. Lippitt, N. Polansky and S. Rosen, 'The Dynamics of Power', in *Human Relations*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1952.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of 656
all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance.

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through 651
its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys 656
cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and 657
by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah.

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige 871
the fellah to improve his mind and his physique.

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, 692
— and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him.

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his en- 702
interest, or collects the exemption fine.

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common 656
interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security.

The Government system in its present form is less than 175
a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, 64
and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live.

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns 643
(not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being 645
of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
sîga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([41]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
857 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics.
593 But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

and new Faculties and Departments have been created. E 873
In 1942 a second University was founded, at Alexandria.
The Government's primary and secondary schools count E
their pupils by hundreds of thousands, and are endowed [872]
with all the latest improvements. Then there are numerous private schools of older foundation. Even the ancient Moslem University of Al-Azhar has felt the wind of reform, and has established new branches, the Institutes of Shubra, Tanta, Assiut, and Qena. Three thousand teachers are busy with elementary education in the villages. Egyptian publications, whether newspapers, E [204 214]
reviews, or books, compare in style and content with the best in Europe, and are a model for all the Arabic-speaking countries. Yet the most important newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, the *Times* of the Near East, has a daily circulation of not E
more than 100,000, and the farmers' review, *Zamil el-* [658]
Fellah, which is published by the Ministry of Agriculture and distributed free, prints only 48,000 copies.

The scientists, scholars, and men of letters who come to E 814
Egypt every year for congresses or conferences find in Cairo 815
or Alexandria audiences as eager and open-minded as those of Paris. They are astonished and say so.

Thinkers and students are busy creating a national E 812
language, a national music, a national theatre and cinema, 814
something which shall be specifically Egyptian, and not 641
just vaguely Islamic. It is very interesting to follow this 178
development of culture. But we must turn aside to see what is happening below.

Have the masses been caught up in this tide of renewal ? E F
Are they following the élite of the cities ? The answer is : 369 178
either not at all or at such a distance that no movement is 212
discernible. Illiteracy still prevails among an overwhelm- E F
ing majority. The latest statistics have had to recognise 636
it. (") It may be that the fault lies with the English, who 181
developed everything in Egypt except education ; with the 871
fellaheen themselves, who are not very gifted and show no eagerness to learn ; or with a syllabus ill-adapted to their mentality and forced upon them with compulsory education. Whatever the cause the fact remains that 95% of F
the fellaheen can neither read nor write. Even if they know 212
how to read, they remain strangers to all interchange of

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is /183
education.

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not found- /185
ed on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least 203
to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious.

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe /183
that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, /185
and that his present state of insensibility and habituation 871
is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same.

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" ("). As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the /166
city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land.

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside /162
has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary /166
figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other /184
hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer

1: Ammar .E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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tutors or in the Kuttab, the most important content in learning is the memorizing of the Koran as the basis of all other knowledge. The Kuttab has been, and is still in many remote villages in Aswan, the institution for religious learning, in which children learn part or the whole of the Koran, to be able to use this knowledge for their recitation and prayers, and the observation of correct ritual and prayer. The learning of reading and writing was always secondary to this all-important aim.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of Kuttabs were financed by the revenue derived from charitable foundations called 'Wakfs'.[1] It was not until 1906 that these schools felt the impact of the central Government authority. In that year the Kuttab was organized, and a system of inspection and awards was worked out in accordance with which Kuttabs satisfying the official requirements could avail themselves of it. The aid was dependent upon daily instruction in the three R's, together with religious teaching, combined with a report of the Ministry of Education Inspector as to the general conditions of the Kuttab.[2] Later on, private awards were given to those boys who could satisfy the Inspector in an oral examination that they had learnt all the Koran by heart.

In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, there is only one aided 'Maktab', which is the official name for a recognized Kuttab, besides the other five unrecognized Kuttabs.[3] It is significant to note that four out of the six Kuttabs are attached to, or situated very near, a mosque, and the fifth is adjacent, and connected with a clan's guest house. Apart from the obvious connection between the mosque and religious learning in the Kuttab, such a proximity between the Kuttab, the mosque and the clan guest house enables the Kuttab boys to fetch water from the wells of the mosque or the clan guest house to be used for drinking, or for cleaning their wooden tablets. Out of the six Sheikhs running the Kuttabs in Silwa, three are blind. The Kuttab building usually consists of two rooms, with a raised dais in each room for the Sheikh. There is hardly any equipment, except the Sheikh's prayer mat, and the wooden tablets on which the boys write their Koranic assignment. The aided Kuttab is, however, an exception, as it has wooden seats, desks, and a blackboard, and is whitewashed. All the Kuttabs, except the aided one, are confined to boys. Only recently have some girls begun to attend the aided Kuttab, as attendance at it exempts both boys and girls from going to the compulsory school. In fact, throughout the history of Moslem Egypt the keenness on teaching girls the Koran has never been so strong as in the case of boys. MacDonald mentioned, however, that there are records of

[1] J. Hayworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt.*

[2] Ministry of Education, *Code of Regulations Relating to Grants-in-Aid to Kuttabs*, No. 1161, May 1906.

[3] The Kuttab is usually referred to in Silwa by the name Khalwa—a word which literally means 'an isolated place for worship'.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

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After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

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use 8

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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used. The pens are made out of maize stalks, the end being sharpened to a point by a razor. This point is then divided in the middle.

After the tablets have been dried in the sun the time for writing the new assignment comes. Monitors gather the boys around them and dictate to them, either from memory or from a copy of the Koran, what they should write. The monitor dictates to each of his pupils in turn, a sentence at a time, and so comes back to the first one, and this continues until the dictation is finished. Some of the beginners do actually use the tablets for writing without actually knowing how to write, although they might be able to recite the alphabet. What really happens is that the monitor manipulates the hand of his pupil on the tablet, or he may write the lines with his fingernail on the tablet, asking the young boy to trace his writing with the pen. He then asks each of the boys to read back to him what he has written. After this the monitors themselves start writing their assignment, which they should read to the Sheikh seated at his feet.

All this takes place in the morning (until about ten o'clock), after which the children are allowed an interval for breakfast. They go home for this and return after a short time to resume the second working period, which lasts until noon, and during which the boys will be reading their written assignment under the supervision of the monitors.[1] Sitting facing the walls, with their tablets in front of them, the boys will be reciting aloud their set texts and swaying their heads and bodies forwards and backwards. The babble and din of the Kuttab is the sure sign for the Sheikh that it is busy and hard-working, for immediately the din dies down, the Sheikh will incite his boys to raise their voices and get on with their work. If the boys persist in any disobedience, the Sheikh would use his stick, laying about him without exception, hitting their backs, whereupon their voices would rise and go again at full pitch. This repetition continues until noon, when the Sheikh claps his hands, letting the boys go for their lunch.

After the lunch recess the boys return to the Kuttab, each carrying a loaf of bread for the Sheikh. This has been selected by the mother as one of her best-baked loaves. Some children do not take loaves with them, but, as a result of an agreement between the Sheikh and the father, the former receives a stipulated amount of corn at the end of each harvest. The loaf, however, is a token of the teacher's work, and ideally, he who teaches the Holy Book is not expected to ask for a remuneration. In fact, the Sheikh receives in addition to the daily loaf certain gifts on various occasions, such as when the boy finishes his alphabet and begins to write the first chapter of the Koran, at the end of each section (juza) and so on. He also receives a white garment, in addition to other gifts, when the boy finishes the whole of the Koran.

The first part of the afternoon work in the Kuttab is taken up with

[1] The time in the Kuttab is not regulated by the hour, but is usually fixed either by the noisy arrival or departure of a train, or according to the shadow cast by the sun from the wall, or a boy's shadow.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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more memorizing of what was written in the morning, irrespective of whether the boy has actually learnt it or not during the previous period. The latter part until the afternoon prayer ('asr) would perhaps be occupied with revising the previous assignments. This is mainly co-operative work where groups of children are formed, according to the level of their advancement in their learning. On other afternoons, instead of such revision, boys may practise penmanship by writing out the alphabet, or copying out the prophetic tradition.

Such is the procedure followed every day in all the village Kuttabs, except on Thursdays, when boys leave the school after the morning break and take Friday as a holiday. On Thursday morning the boys do not write any new assignment from the Koran, but spend the morning either listening to readings from the Prophet's life and trying to learn some of the poems in his praise, or by imbibing some religious teaching, such as lustration, prayer ritual, and Islamic obligations. This might be followed by a general sweeping of the Kuttab floor in which everybody takes part. Thursday morning always ends with a congregational prayer which is said firstly by the older boys, and then repeated by the rest. The text of the prayer is as follows:

O, our Lord, O, our Lord,
Who listens to our petitions,
By the sanctity of Mohammed,
Frustrate not our hopes.
Mohammed is the son of Abdullah,
and the reader of Allah's Book.
As the Holy One in Paradise,
Calls us to enter into his company
Where he will give us the drink as we shall give unto him
From the Springs of Paradise,
O, our Sheikh (who is present), may God forgive his sins,
For us and for him, the door of Paradise,
As the door of Paradise is (prepared) for the Moslems
And the door of the Fire for the Unbelievers.

After this is finished, they all recite together:

O, our Mustapha (one of the names of the Prophet), accept our petition,
And teach us knowledge, and increase in that abundantly.

This prayer will be followed by the Sheikh's exhortation to all the boys to be obedient to their parents, revise at home those parts of the Koran which they have already learnt, not to play idly in the streets, and to the older boys to attend the Friday prayers in the mosque. Then the 'Fatiha' will be read by the Sheikh; and the boys, after kissing the Sheikh's hand, go home or straight to the field.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran. 792 794

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab. 794 [782] [865] [876]

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at 793

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter Eleven

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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AFTER reviewing the indigenous aims and methods of learning and teaching, we turn now to the modern system of schooling which has affected the village as a result of the national educational policy. This type of schooling is represented in the two schools of the village, the compulsory and the primary school.

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The compulsory school was established by the Provincial Council in 1925. In discussing the village compulsory school one must inevitably touch on educational problems at the national level. Compulsory schools were established to meet the long-felt need for mass literacy. The 'Egyptian Constitution' promulgated in 1923, declared in Article 19 that elementary education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls. Accordingly the Ministry of Education planned to put this article into effect. The Ministry's scheme rejected the Kuttab as completely inadequate to cope with the problems of illiteracy, and of no educational value. Hence, new schools, called 'compulsory schools', had to be established. The period of compulsory education was to be for five years (from seven to twelve years old) on a half-day basis. The object of this programme was to benefit the maximum number of boys and girls. The time limit for completing the programme of compulsory education by providing a place for every child and thus abolishing illiteracy was fixed as fifteen years, and was extended later to twenty years.[1] The scheme was based on the participation of the Provincial Councils with the Ministry of Education, the former to be responsible for the sites, buildings, furniture and equipment; the latter for the staffing and administration. In 1933, owing to the difficulties entailed in the previous programme, a new education bill was passed to enforce attendance between the ages of seven and twelve, thus reducing the period to five years instead of six, and still on the half-day basis. Only those who suffer from physical or mental diseases, or those who live more than two kilometres from the nearest school, are exempt. The law also stipulates that the child's parents or guardians are responsible for his education in a compulsory school, if he is not receiving education else-

[1] Al-Kabbani, *Siasat al-T'alim fi Misr*, Cairo, 1945, pp. 9-10 (Arabic).

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of school-children during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

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the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

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However, many of the benefits of compulsory education have been vitiated by the policy of cheap education for the poor. The theory and practice of compulsory education makes this quite obvious. Theoretically, the main purpose has been to train the child in the three R's, and to enable him to understand and to appreciate those principles of social life compatible with his own position, and to lead a good and contented life.[1] In practice, the mark of poverty is even more obvious, comparing the building equipment and teachers' salaries of compulsory schools with those of primary and secondary schools. Up to 1948, the latest year for which statistics are available, the appropriations for compulsory elementary education never exceeded 30 per cent of the total expenditure on other types of schools, while it amounted to almost 70 per cent in other countries such as France, the Netherlands, Ireland and England, bearing in mind, of course, that most of these countries had finished a long time ago with the initial expenses on building and equipment.[2] On the other hand, about 10 per cent of the educational expenditure in Egypt in 1936 was devoted to higher education at the University level, while the expenditure in the European countries previously mentioned amounted in the same year to 4 per cent and 6 per cent at the same level. The year 1936 is not an unusual one, as it represents the proportion of educational expenditure which is one of the main reasons for the top-heaviness of the Egyptian educational system, or as it is usually branded, 'the inverted pyramid'.[3]

Thus to throw the blame of the failure of the compulsory school on to the apathy of the fellah is to make a confusion of issues and an easy way out for those who do not think that education is a commodity to be sold, and that such a commodity must be desirable, useful, or appealing in some ways to the customer. Up to 1948 the compulsory elementary school was a separate world in two respects: separate from the real life of the rural population, and separate from the other types of schools which command

Item of food	*Quantity*
Bread	120 grammes
White cheese	10 ,,
Tomatoes	60 ,,
Nuts (fool soudani) ..	30 ,,
Salt	1 ,,
Cooked beans (fool midamis)	80 ,,
Oil (No. 1)	10 ,,
Dried dates	60 ,,
Boiled eggs	1

[1] *Year Book of Education*, 1939, article by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education on 'Education in Egypt', p. 746.

[2] See *Annuaire Internationale de l'Education et de l'Enseignement*, 1939. The writer is aware of the difficulties involved in such a comparison, but the differences are so striking that they are certainly significant.

[3] See the writer's M.A. thesis on 'An Enquiry into Inequalities of Educational Opportunities in Egypt' (London University, 1949, unpublished).

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such a high prestige as they lead to the coveted government posts. In fact, a child leaving the compulsory school at the age of twelve cannot proceed to a secondary school education, except through the primary school, which he is now too old to enter. It must be pointed out here that the primary school leading to secondary and higher education has been a different type of school from the elementary school. In this way, the elementary school population has been debarred from any further educational facilities, except the elementary Teacher Training Schools and al-Azhar. This handicap of the compulsory school has stimulated the idea of unifying the first stage of education for all children of six to twelve years of age, as is the case in other democratic countries. The Elementary Education Act, passed by the Parliament in 1948, was the crowning effort of the previous attempt to bring the primary and elementary schools together. In theory, at least, the curriculum and the equipment at the elementary school are to be brought up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the primary school. In addition to that, the half-day system is to be abolished, and the elementary course is to extend to six years on a full-day basis from six to twelve.[1]

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The compulsory school in Silwa has not felt the impact of the new changes except in the name, being called the converted primary school: it has remained the same both in building, equipment and content of education, as well as the period of schooling from seven to twelve, and no children have been transferred from the primary school, as they have never reached the standards required.

Unattracted by the compulsory school, the villagers have been clamouring for a primary school, the desire for which has been motivated by practical purposes. In spite of the Elementary Education Act of 1948, the primary school is, in the villagers' view, the only way leading to government jobs, and thus for wealth and prestige. It happened that during the early days of my stay in the village (December 1950), the Minister of Education in Egypt appealed to the rich to contribute liberally in money or in premises for educational purposes. On this occasion the member of the Upper House for Silwa was persuaded by the villagers to build the school and offer it to the Minister. The site was chosen, and the building was just beginning when the writer left the village in April 1951. The new primary school has actually been functioning since October of the same year. The school takes children from the age of seven to twelve on the basis of an entrance examination in reading, writing, arithmetic and

[1] *Ministry of Education Report*, 1947–8, pp. 3–4 (in Arabic), Government Press, Cairo, 1948. New laws have been recently enacted (May–June 1953) for the reorganization of the educational system in Egypt. The struggle for the unified school is being won. The system is divided into three stages: 1. primary (6–10); 2. preparatory (10–12); 3. secondary (12–16). Curricula for the various stages are under review for their adaptation to the needs of the learners.

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drawing. In towns where there are kindergartens, children who completed the three years of the kindergarten are admitted without any examination. While the elementary school has always been free, the primary school only became free since 1943. The enthusiasm for the primary school in contrast to the blind alley of the elementary school, is that it leads to secondary schools and higher education. 872

In 1948 an Education Act was passed for the unification of the elementary and primary school to provide a common school for all. The ideal implied in the Act is to bring the curriculum and equipment of the elementary school up to the level of the primary school, with the exception of keeping a foreign language in the third and fourth years of the latter, while the former would give more instruction in Arabic and religion. Both schools would thus lead to secondary education.

The purpose of the modern system of education, primary, secondary and higher education, as envisaged by Muhammad Ali during the first half of the nineteenth century, was to train civil servants. The national policy of education, and consequently the people themselves, has connected this type of education with government service. From that point of view, the more children who attended the school the better, thereby providing wider scope of selection of employees for the government administration. The more children went to such schools, the less they received in return. As supply overtook demand, competition forced up the requirements for government jobs and lowered the economic value of certificates and degrees. In the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, a primary school certificate was sufficient qualification for a government job; later candidates for the same job were obliged to produce a secondary school certificate, and later even university graduates failed to find remunerative work. 871

In spite of all this, the appeal of such schools and institutions leading, not to the 'white collar' jobs in general as in the West, but particularly to government posts, cannot be exaggerated. Mann's observation in this respect still holds: 'In no other country in the world perhaps do the professional classes and especially the civil servants enjoy such widespread prestige and admiration. Hence inevitably the enthusiasm of Egyptian parents flows irresistibly into the channels of superior education, secondary or higher. The result is that there is a continual over-pressure on the accommodation of primary and secondary schools and the higher colleges, and public opinion persistently demands a further expansion of facilities at a time when the gravest doubts have arisen in the minds of the competent authorities whether a supply of professionally trained men is not being annually produced far larger than the country can ever hope to absorb.'[1] [554]

This research had been conducted before the establishment of the primary school in Silwa, and thus may serve as a base line for the effect of such an education on the village life. From information received, the 872

[1] F. O. Mann, 'Education in Egypt', *Year Book of Education*, 1932, p. 991.

1:Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

872 villagers consider the establishment of a primary school in their village as a sign of 'blessedness' enabling their boys to find some scope for work in government jobs, especially as the land resources are becoming increasingly limited. As one of the villagers put it, 'It is free education for which one had to go previously to Aswan or Cairo'. The new school accommodates 138 pupils in three grades. As expected, it has affected the number of boys who go to the Kuttab, the numbers of one of them declining from forty to fourteen. It has also affected the number of boys in the elementary school, especially those in the third grade who, instead of remaining in the school, preferred to go to the second or third grade of the primary school. The two following statements express the feeling of the boys about the new school:

[177 291] A boy of twelve said: 'We like the new school, as we wear suits (European), which are much nicer than the gallabiahs which we used to wear in the elementary school. The former is better than the latter in its lessons, order, and cleanliness.'

Another boy of eleven said: 'The primary school has more knowledge to teach. We wear an "effendi" suit, warmer and more beautiful than the gallabiah. We shall become government officials when we pass our examinations. Moreover, there are no girls in our new school.'

The boys and girls of the elementary school, in all the ten statements received, envy those boys of the primary school their 'effendi' dress, but equally assert that primary pupils are not better off than they in any way. They say: 'We have the same books and learn the same lessons, and are capable of challenging them in reading, or in the multiplication tables.'

212 After discussing the three educational institutions in the village, it is necessary to review the state of literacy in general. The writer could not possibly make a survey of the literate people in Silwa, but thinks that their percentage would certainly be little less than the average for the whole country. The following table shows the percentage of male and female literates for Egypt as a whole since 1907.[1]

TABLE VII

Literacy in Egypt, male and female

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*
1907	5·4	9·8	1·1
1917	7·9	13·6	2·1
1927	13·8	22·9	4·7
1937	18·6	26·8	10·5

The general census for the year 1947 has not been published yet, but it

[1] The table is made by calculating the percentage for the figures given in the general census for the respective years.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Upper Egypt

CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *fellāḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, 562 and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be [872] taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are [252] engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [944] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was sitting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

donkey to the fields and the *gamoossa* to the canal, where he 857
climbs on its back and sets it turning the *saqia*. The child
learns how to cry out, how to chase off thieving birds with
stones, how to pick and even plant cotton. He does not
lack amusement, for he has plenty of companions. During
the day, when the men are toiling in the fields and the
women are busy in the house or by the canal, the whole vil-
lage belongs to the children. It is they whom a visitor
sees first. They paddle stark naked in the pond, and learn
to swim. They have bulging bellies, for they eat anything [524]
and everything. They play in the dust, spinning an onion
as a top, hopping on one leg and holding the other heel
with their hands, or shooting with a catapult (*nibla*) at date-
palms or birds. When they are a little older they play at
sîga, a kind of marble game with small pebbles which have
to be moved into forty-nine holes made in the sand.

At about the age of seven the young fellah is circumcised, 852
and thus introduced into the world of men. At this stage he
has to go to the elementary school (*ilzamiya*), at least in the 872
mornings. His parents are bound to send him, under pain of 656
a fine of twenty piastres, or fifty for a second offence. 95% [212]
of the fellaheen are illiterate, and the Government wishes
to wipe out this disgrace from the next generation. The
1923 Constitution decreed that education should be com-
pulsory, but it is only since 1935 that this order has begun
to take effect. Schools are being established all over the
countryside. Gradually sites are being found in the villages,
schools set up, and teachers appointed. Every year, places
that within living memory had never seen a teacher are
provided with a complete teaching staff. In 1946 there
should be 4,600 free elementary schools, and the whole child
population will be receiving instruction ([1]).

The parents do not understand these new ideas. Though 177
accustomed to other tyrannical institutions, they do not 871
resign themselves to this. Some Upper Egyptians of 'Ezbet 183
Balkan, who had been fined for not sending their children 579
to the compulsory Government school, attacked the teachers
and wounded them. The peasants care little for education.
They only want their children to help them to increase their
earnings. Moreover, most villages are still served, according 871
to the ancient system, by a *kuttab*, in which a blind teacher, 794
seated on the ground, gathers a few children round him
and teaches them the Koran.

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
[464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

Another such enterprise is the holiday scheme of five 747
young Egyptian women at Kolossona in Upper Egypt (").872
"Two cousins of mine, my two sisters and myself", says one of them, whose report we are quoting, "opened our little school at the beginning of July 1933. The Government school was too far from the village and on the other side of a dangerous level-crossing. Our premises, which consist of two rooms kindly lent by a lady, are in the middle of the village.

"When the school was opened, apparatus and supplies were quite inadequate. In spite of this we set to work and took sixty children, mostly girls, between six and seventeen years of age. At first, keeping order was troublesome, but little by little things improved.

"We taught reading and writing, manual work, and games. The roll was called every morning.

"By giving prizes for regularity, we kept up attendances to 70%. The following year, when we had 170 on our books, the percentage was 80.

"We made real progress in both reading and writing, and still more in cleanliness. Sham jewellery disappeared, faces were washed every morning, and the children kept their hair clean. An anti-fly campaign was organised.

"Every day we used to put eyes, drops in the children's [757]
and children with serious trouble were sent to the oculist. On Friday, though there was no school, the children came for a health inspection, and were given a cake of soap and some hair-wash.

"We gave the boys drawing-lessons, in which we had to teach them how to distinguish colours, and the girls sewing-lessons, in which we showed them how to make dresses.

"We found difficulty at first in organising games, but [524]
it was not very long before the children began to understand and keep the rules."

This experiment lasted for three years. Unfortunately it came to an end with the departure of young women who had undertaken it.

The experience of school teachers with their pupils, 747
and of landowners with their tenants or share-croppers, teaches them that the progress or regression of the fellah depends largely on themselves. Some make real efforts

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand. E F 113

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages. F [586]

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14. F [162 872]

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.) E F [796 527]

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Mawlid Salma (Prophet's Life-story).

These books are usually obtained from an itinerary vendor, who occasionally visits the village. Amongst those who own books, three persons actually possess the bulk of the books found in the village: they are the Sheikh of the recognized 'Kuttab', a village school teacher, and an ambitious young man who owns a shop in the village at present, after having spent more than ten years in Cairo and Alexandria. Yet perhaps none of these people possess more than a dozen books.

As to the spread of the newspapers, there are ten persons in this community of over three thousand people who buy newspapers, although not regularly. They get them from a distributor travelling by local train. Three of the newspaper buyers are shopkeepers, while two others are teachers in the compulsory school. News naturally infiltrates to a large extent through reading aloud the news in the village gatherings, or through borrowing the newspapers. Up to 1951 there was no radio set in the village and, of course, no cinema, thus contact with the outside world, as far as these aids are concerned, was entirely absent.

The extent of literacy in this community could also be expressed in the number of people who have been to any school other than those educational institutions existing in the village (before the establishment of the primary school in the village). The following is a list enumerating all the boys and men who are receiving some kind of education outside the village:[1]

Nine boys in the primary school in Aswan (under 12 years old).

One boy in the secondary school in Aswan (14 years old).

Six boys in the Training College for Elementary Teachers in Aswan.

Two elementary school teachers who are actually teaching in the village compulsory school.

One higher education.

In analysing these educated people from the village, it is important to show the various incentives for their education. Four of those in the primary school and the elementary training college are cousins: the father of two of them is an Azharite and a teacher at the village school, and it is not surprising that he should send his two sons to school in Aswan. Two years ago, however, his younger brother quarrelled with him, and decided to vie with him at every turn, even in sending two of his sons to the same schools as those of his brother. Two of the other boys are sons of a relatively well-off woman who forced her husband to divorce her. She then married a younger man, and managed to keep her two sons under her custody by sending them to school and personally bearing the expenses incurred by their education in Aswan, as the father himself could not do so. One of the boys in the primary school in Aswan is the son of a blind man who possesses practically no land and on receiving aid (£E2 a month) for his disability from the Ministry of Endowment, decided to send his son to school.

[1] There are no village girls at all who have received or are receiving education outside the village compulsory school.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of schoolchildren during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

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MR13 Fellahin MR13
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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Chapter Ten

INDIGENOUS LEARNING AND TEACHING

121 It has been pointed out by some anthropologists that in homogeneous primitive societies, the attention is focused more on the desirability of learning over against the desirability of teaching.[1] As the cultural alternatives are so limited in such communities, the individual finds himself learning the accepted skills, habits and attitudes which everyone else agrees that he would wish to learn. The desirability of learning the socially acceptable modes of living is contrasted, on the whole, with modern societies where individuals are taught various things on which there is no consensus of agreement that everyone has a desire to know. This distinction between folk and modern societies reflected in the different methods of learning and teaching is, of course, not an absolute distinction. For instance, in folk communities teaching does take place, e.g. in certain ceremonies, in the constant corrections and admonitions to children, and so on; and learning does take place in modern societies in the family and group situations.

● 876 In folk communities in general, the educative process, whether through learning or teaching, is coterminous with life, and none of its situations is deliberately singled out or isolated for drill or special training.[2] In Silwa the popular saying tends to confirm that the desire to learn is preferable to the need of being taught: 'If the boy does not learn, time will teach him the hard way.' This is also in line with the traditions of Moslem society, where people have been expected to seek knowledge as 'knowledge does not seek people'. Whether in search of special skills or religious enlightenment, the master did not go seeking pupils, but rather the converse. In the Arabic language the word for pupil or student (talib) literally means 'the searcher', he who requests and requires knowledge.

It should also be pointed out here that folk life in Silwa has been relatively independent of the influence of the written word, and it has been affected by it only through a small number of people who were considered

[1] Margaret Mead, 'Our Educational Emphases in Primitive Perspective', in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVIII, 1943, p. 634.
[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, p. 27.

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to be specialists in transmitting to others the religious knowledge of the Holy Book and the pious ancestors. The oral means of communicating and committing to memory the accumulated experiences is the best guide for perpetuating the group's tradition. It is not surprising, then, that old people are considered as knowing more than the young, and that, on these grounds, they are worthy of respect and obedience. The young have to wait many years before they can wield the same prestige and authority, for the instruments of wisdom may only be acquired through the passage of time. It is not unusual to hear people who wish to assert their position or to impress others with their views saying: 'I am a man who has witnessed both the pre-Islamic (jahiliya) and Islamic eras.'[1]

Good memory is certainly a great asset and indeed highly valued in Silwa, and the person with a good memory is usually described as the one with 'the full head'. The ability to remember names, places, events, and genealogies enhances the person's popularity and makes his participation and consultation desirable in social activities. The emphasis on memory training is impressed on the child as early as its efforts to learn to talk. Mothers utter a few words for the child to repeat, and then ask it to go round to all those who may be present, and say these words to each in turn, and this is recognized as the best method for the teaching of language. One of the favourite amusements of adults with children is to test the latter in reciting the names of their families in genealogical order. Very frequently, however, the adults may purposely interject incorrect names to mislead the children. Some children between the age of three and four, on being asked by the writer to recite their family names, would tell him as many as four or five of their names (the first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's, the great-grandfather's and so on).[2] In a symbolical way, the mother encourages the child to eat pigeon's head, as it is believed that this will foster the child's alertness of memory in later years of life.

It would be very difficult to determine here to what extent the importance laid on memory and memorization has been the product of the Islamic view of learning. It should be mentioned, however, in this connection that knowledge, for the Moslem scholars, was not so much a reaching out to the unknown (research), as it was a mechanical process of amassing the 'known'; the known being eternal and given, is unchangeable. Thus the acquisition of information and the deduction from accepted premises were the most important methods of knowledge.[3] A learned man

[1] This is, of course, an artificial claim such as the English expression, 'I don't know him from Adam'. The historical sense amongst the villagers, especially the older generation, is mainly thought of in the partition between the two eras, the pre-Islamic and the Islamic.

[2] It must be pointed out that in Silwa, or for that matter in Egypt as a whole, there is no system of first names and surnames. In Silwa, every person is always called by his first name. Unfamiliarity or respect requires only the addition of the title 'sheikh' in front of the first name.

[3] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 64–6.

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is to this day judged by the amount of the Koran and the number of prophetic traditions which he can quote, and the number of proverbs and maxims he can bring into the argument. It is not surprising then that out of some twenty learned religious men in the village, five of them are well known for their perfect memorization of the Koran, two for the memorization of many poetic verses of the Sheikhs of the Nakhshabandia sect, thus becoming the leaders of the order in the village, while two others are acknowledged as the most able reciters of verses and charms to ward off the 'evil eye'. From the linguistic point of view, for the speaker to claim that he knows a great deal about a particular thing, event, or person, is for him to assert that he 'memorizes it, or him, to the best of his memory'.[1]

The writer is inclined to assume that the Islamic culture, or at least as it is practised in the Silwa community, emphasizes and fosters rote learning, memory, and enumerative procedures. There is abundant evidence of this in the repetitive elements in greetings, in conversation, in the verses and choruses in folk singing, in the ritual of the mystical orders (zikr), in the need to know the ninety-nine attributes of God, and the thirty-three names of the Prophet, and in the traditional way of memorizing the Koran in the Kuttab. In this connection, MacDonald says, 'Moslem practice was to repeat aloud until the thing was learnt—that is, by heart. They had observed, too, that no special thought was called for, only continued repetition.'[2]

In stating that the village culture mainly stimulates memory as the most important cognitive process one does not necessarily imply that people in the village have good memories. This emphasis on memory could be related to what Bateson calls the eidos of a culture, meaning by it that a culture might have a bias for the standardization of the cognitive aspects of the personality of its participants expressed in their cultural behaviour.[3] One is tempted here to ask a similar question to that posed by Bateson himself as to what extent this bias for amassing knowledge is limited only to a small number of specialists. In attempting an answer, it must be remembered that the stimulation of a small number of specialists can react on the culture as a whole; they have set themselves up as the leaders of the village life both in religious and social matters. From this it is fairly justified to conclude, as Bateson did, that 'the individuals most affected by the stimulation of memory actually contribute very much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of the culture'.[4]

[1] The equivalent phrase to this in the colloquial language of the village is 'hafdanuh hifd', in classical Arabic 'ahfathuh hiftha'.

[2] MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, New York, 1911. The resort to rote learning has been the bane of education in modern schools. Criticisms of students' 'parrot-like' work are abundant in many of the official Government Reports. See E. Claparède, *Rapport Général Présenté au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, Cairo, 1929; F. O. Mann, *A Report on Certain Aspects of Egyptian Education*, Cairo, 1929; Ministry of Education, *Report on Secondary Education*, Cairo, 1935.

[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*, p. 220.

[4] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

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One cannot fail to notice that both

828 children and adults have their feet firmly established on the ground, and
[159] fancies of imagination are neither encouraged nor desirable.

My informant, Ali, told me a point which is relevant to this question of imagination. He said that one should not think in terms of 'if' or 'as if', [154] as according to the prophetic tradition, ' "if" opens the path for the Devil's advance'. It is also interesting to mention that the classical Arabic word for imagination (khayal) is used in the village to denote 'shadow', and does not refer to a mental process, except, of course, to some literate persons. This does not mean that some children are not imaginative, and they are recognized by other children who may sometimes sneer at them by asking them to relate some of their fantasies (literally pinches). Children would tell you that such flights of fancy run through certain families. Adults, however, do not expect children to use, much less exercise or enrich, their imagination as this would hamper their social and economic maturity.

811 In discussing the formal educational institutions in the village at the
799 present time, the Kuttab comes first in importance, as it is the indigenous school for memorizing the Koran. The word 'Kuttab' is an old Arabic word, connected in its etymological derivation with the word 'kitab' (book), being the place where the Holy Book is learnt. The educational ideals and methods of this institution are mainly influenced by the Islamic 816 tradition of learning, an example of which is the advice given by the Caliph Harun al Rashid to al-Ahmar, the tutor of his son, al-Amin, in which he said: 'O, Ahmar, I have given you the child of my blood, the fruit of my loins, and given you power over him, and made him obedient to you; therefore prove worthy of this position. Teach him the Koran, History, Poetry, Traditions, and appreciation of eloquence. Prevent him from laughing except on proper occasions. Accustom him to respect the Sheikhs of the Hashimite family, and to offer a place to the military commanders if they attend to his council. . . . Do not be too kind to him, or he will take to idleness. Improve him kindly, but if that will not suffice, you can treat him harshly.'[1]

Another example would also serve to illustrate the content and method of Islamic education. This is taken from the instructions given by 'Amr Ibn 'Utbah to the tutor of his sons: 'My sons will be deeply influenced by you: favour what you do, and abhor what you avoid. Teach them the Koran, but without wearying them of it, recite to them what is good in traditions, and chaste in poetry. . . . Teach them the virtues of wise men, 000 and keep them away from women's conversation.'[2] Whether with private

[532] content and of 'perspective' in technique; with persons walking sideways in the ancient Egyptian tradition of drawing.

For similar results about free drawings, see Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, p. 12.

[1] A. Ibn Khaldoun, *al-Mukkadimah*, Cairo, p. 399 (Arabic).

[2] A. Shalaby, 'History of Moslem Education' (Ph.D. Thesis, unpublished, Cambridge University, 1950).

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This is the normal routine of the Kuttab, one which has now been challenged by the compulsory school which does not allow any boy between seven and twelve years old to attend the Kuttab for a full day, and at present only those who are less than seven or over twelve can afford to remain in the Kuttab for the full day. In spite of this some of the compulsory school boys attend the Kuttab early in the morning where they write their Koranic assignment before going to the school; some of them bring their loaves of bread at lunch-time for the Sheikh, and spend about an hour after the end of the school day in the Kuttab learning the Koran.

The Kuttab is not merely an educational institution for the boys. Adults also visit it to consult the Sheikh about certain religious matters, to have a letter written, or a charm supplied against the evil eye, or just to listen to the Koran being recited, or even for an ordinary chat. They have free access to the Kuttab, sitting outside or in the outer room, or they may enter it to ask the Sheikh's permission to take away their boy temporarily for some pressing errand or task. One occasionally sees adults bringing food or tea to Kuttab children as a 'karama', or to invoke the boys' purity in asking God to fulfil one of his wishes. The Kuttab boys are supposed to combine the innocence of children with the 'baraka' of the Koran, and hence their prayers are usually answered by God. Parents go to the Kuttab to complain to the Sheikh about the misdemeanours of their sons, whereupon the Sheikh would give the boys concerned a lesson on the importance of obedience to parents, or threaten them, or even thrash them in front of their parents. The method of discipline in the Kuttab is that of *jus flagelli*. In cases of serious offences such as offending one's father or swearing at religion, or mentioning the mother in swearing, two strong boys would hold the offender's feet in a turban (usually the offender's turban if he wears one), and lift them in front of the Sheikh, who would administer the striking as he deems fit. The corporal punishment administered to the children by the Kuttab Sheikh is almost universally accepted by the villagers without complaint. During my stay, there was only one occasion on which one of the villagers lodged a complaint against the Sheikh to the police, accusing the former of unduly thrashing his son, and this, according to the Sheikh himself, was the first event of its kind in his lifetime. Since then none of the Sheikhs has accepted that boy in his Kuttab.

The Sheikhs are indeed highly respected in the village, for they not only teach the boys the Koran, but derive their status from the fact that they are the perpetuators of the Holy Book giving enlightenment to the people on religious matters. In Silwa and its neighbouring villages, the leaders of the mosque prayers (Imams) are always Kuttab Sheikhs, and people seek their advice if they are in doubt whether a particular action or deed is in conformity with religious injunctions. Some of them also recite the Koran during the nightly celebration in Ramadan and at

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793 'mulids', weddings and funerals. They are never addressed without the prefix of 'Sheikh'.

871 794 [876] In evaluating the educational aims of the Kuttab, one must remember the purpose of such an institution in a community like Silwa, and its aims in Egyptian society in general during the eighteenth century for instance. The present Kuttab in Silwa fulfills the task demanded of it by the people in maintaining the standards of Islamic learning in which the memorizing of the Koran comes first and foremost. Indeed, the religious and moral ideals of Islam have determined the scope of Islamic education. For the Greeks, education was part of politics, for the Moslems it is part of a comprehensive system of theology. For the latter the object of education is the salvation of the soul and not the control of nature and society.[1]

To expect the Kuttabs to prepare children for practical life or to teach them arithmetic, drawing, or rhythmic movements, according to some of the modern critics of these institutions, is to assume modern standards and social demands in a society which by its very organization does not require its schools to provide such activities. This is the task of the parents, and is to be learnt through life itself. It must be emphasized here that children are sent to the Kuttab voluntarily and they themselves are not averse to attending it to learn part of the Koran. Indeed, the alternative is for the children to work hard in the fields. The Kuttab Sheikhs are fully aware of the drawbacks of the educational system in the village at present. They see that the learning of the Koran by the children is interrupted by compulsory schooling, that parents do not leave their children undisturbed in the Kuttabs but frequently withdraw them to help at home or in the fields. They also complain that fewer boys remain in the Kuttab to go through the Koran again, after they finish the first time, and thus they forget it quickly. Nevertheless, in spite of what one may say of the Kuttab, it is evident from the opinions of the villagers that one cannot ignore the strength of the religious motive that renders this educational institution an integral part of the community. Practically every family in the village with more than two sons would like, as an ideal, to dedicate one of them 'to the cause of knowledge' (Ilm). Moreover, one notices that it is usually the younger brothers who attend the Kuttab, as the older brothers are more often needed for father's aid in farm work. Yet it is not unusual to hear of a man taking a vow to send his first son to the Kuttab, for this means an economic sacrifice for the sake of 'baraka', emanating from learning the Koran. Sending the youngest boy to the Kuttab is considered as a way of showing parental affection for the last born, by sparing him the arduous tasks of working in the fields. Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves [732] in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it.

[1] See for example the writings of Al-Ghazali, *Ihya-ulum-iddin* (Boulak, 1872); Az-Zarnuji, *Ta 'lim al Muta'allim Wa Tariqat at-ta 'allum* (translated by C. E. von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, New York, 1947).

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Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age.

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay.

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced.

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1]

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

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high-pressure ego development. The sense of importance and worthiness is continually hammered into the children's minds through comparing them with either their sibling or other children.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that competitiveness in Silwa receives its first stimulus from sibling relationships, and is expressed in the popular saying that 'children who come on top of one another cannot get along with each other'. Siblings of different ages are expected to play in different age groups, especially after the age of six or seven. Although there is no institutionalized favouritism for the first son with regard to inheritance, for example, he is usually the most welcome member of the family as in his later life he will be his father's representative. It is no accident, then, that the first-born son receives more attention, as is usually expressed in his ceremonies of naming, circumcision, and wedding.

Together with this sibling relationship envisaged in a series of children chasing each other, one can hardly fail to note the difference of treatment between boys and girls in general. These disparities between the treatment of the two sexes are not mainly based on the superiority of the male sex or the female, but are largely founded on the relevance of the two sexes to the perpetuation of the family name and their respective economic activities.[2] The popular saying goes to the effect that the daughter's son should not receive much attention from his grandfather as such attention is wasted. However, it does not unduly worry parents in any way if their daughters do not show behaviour indications of rivalry during childhood. It will become clearer, as we proceed, that girls only enjoy relative indulgence during infancy, especially with regard to their comparatively longer period of suckling. But from childhood onwards they are expected to approach sociological adulthood more quickly than the boys.[3]

The second characteristic of the period of childhood is connected with the decreasing amount of care and attention given to the child by its mother. This is evidenced by the children's appearance during this stage of development. They are less clean in body and clothes, and it is not an unusual sight to find nasal mucus on children's faces. Mothers justify this neglect on the grounds that the child at this stage, where he is usually out with other children and thus exposed to the public, should not appear attractive for fear of the evil eye. This lack of interest in children's appearance usually continues until the age of nine, ten or eleven. Thereafter an unkempt or shabby child would be a disgrace to his parents. The renewed interest, especially in the child's clothes, after the age of ten, is related also to the need for covering the organs of reproduction by wearing

[1] For concrete statements of children concerning sibling rivalry, see Appendix VIII, 'Stewart Emotional Response Test', and Appendix X, 'Story Completion Test'.

[2] See Chapter I.

[3] It is assumed here that rivalry is socially inherited and is passed on from parents to their children. 'A mother through her attitude continues the old battle, and in the competitive struggles of her children she relives the competitive struggles of her childhood.' R. H. Hilgard, 'Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity', in *Psychiatry*, Vol. 14, 1951.

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suitable clothes. Grown-up boys and girls who wear torn clothes which might expose their pudenda, are open to shame and gossip amongst other children.

With regard to clothes, it is noticed that children, up to the age of nine or ten, usually wear a one-piece garment called a gallabiah, with a head-cap (takia) for boys, and a coloured head-cloth for girls (mudawaria). Children do not dress like their fathers or mothers, who wear two-piece garments at least, always with a black over-garment, especially when they go out of the house for a gathering or a visit. Yet after about the age of ten, both boys and girls tend to approximate their parents in their dress, with the exception of the black over-garment. Boys, for example, wear pants under their gallabiahs, while the girls wear two gallabiahs when they are outside the house.

The fact that the children after weaning receive a decreasing amount of care and attention is a contributory factor to the high death-rate of children. In Silwa, as judged from the health centre records during the last three years, the highest mortality figure is for the children between two and five years old. For the country as a whole, the birth-rate ranks among the highest in the world.[1] For the years between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate per thousand in the population was 42·2, 41·6, 40·8, 38·2, 39·6 respectively. The following table shows the death-rate according to different age groups with those of less than five years giving the highest percentages.[2]

TABLE II

Death-rate according to different age-groups

Age	1942 %	1943 %	1944 %	1945 %	1946 %
less than one year	22·22	22·33	23·40	23·50	23·20
from 1–4 years	28·20	25·0	26·81	25·30	25·80
„ 5–9 „	3·90	3·84	3·92	6·04	3·34
„ 10–19 „	3·66	3·84	4·06	4·22	4·43
„ 20–29 „	3·94	4·23	3·98	4·06	4·25
„ 30–39 „	5·05	5·51	5·09	5·02	5·37
„ 40–49 „	4·84	5·38	4·93	4·79	5·18
„ 50–59 „	4·50	5·06	4·68	4·55	4·86
„ 60–69 „	4·87	5·48	5·05	4·85	5·26
„ 70–79 „	5·11	5·64	5·17	5·00	5·45
„ 80–89 „	5·34	5·49	5·15	4·99	5·29
„ 90 and over	7·90	7·87	7·18	7·10	7·06
unidentified ages	0·32	0·299	0·64	0·525	0·405

[1] *Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations*, 1942–4.
[2] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 32, from which these percentages are worked out.

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Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age.

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay.

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced.

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1]

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

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With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends. Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

[1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

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Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue. 882 883 133

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them. 883

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1] 882 [183] 83 882

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting [514] [834]

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa. [882]

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907. [841]

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation.

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- analyst]

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men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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effect of social learning and to an intensified understanding of the social meaning of maturity. Looking at adolescence as a stage of social development and social experience, it does not differ markedly from the stages of childhood.[1] With the increase in the physical and mental capacities of the growing boy or girl, he or she is expected to have fully mastered the skills and faithfully observed the social norms and attitudes which he or she has hitherto been imbibing and practising. What Fortes observed in the process of socialization in Taleland applies almost equally to this peasant community where the total pattern of behaviour is not built up bit by bit, through addition, but evolves from the embryonic form in an almost concentric pattern of development.[2] In this way the norms of development are increasingly reinforced and intensified through institutional and social learning. Moreover, with the comparatively slow pace of change, the adolescent develops a sense of cultural assurance since he sees others going through experiences culturally similar to his own.[3]

At this juncture it is appropriate to mention that in some communities characterized by continuity of social training combined with lax and even social disciplines, the period of adolescence does not witness emotional stress and turmoil which hitherto have been considered as inevitable characteristics of this phase of development.[4] Moreover, recent investigations among adolescents in Western communities have shown that such symptoms of stress and ferment are absent amongst boys and girls who have been reared in favourable conditions; and the conclusion is that appearance of such traits is neither an inevitable accompaniment of the adolescent stage nor an inescapable consequence of the maturing of certain animal-like instincts.[5]

Some psychologists and especially Freudian analysts maintain that the biological changes in adolescence have a great impact on the individual's behaviour.[6] This is one extreme, while the other is to consider adolescence as purely a sociological phenomenon and merely a social experience involving new adjustments to social situations and relationships. Here adolescence is to be considered as a bio-social phenomenon, dependent on the cultural conditioning of the individual with regard to his maturing sex

[1] M. Mead, 'Coming of Age in Samoa'; Reuter, Foster and Mead, 'Sociological Research in Adolescence', in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLII, 1936, 1937, pp. 81–94.

[2] M. Fortes, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, pp. 42–3.

[3] M. Mead, 'Character Formation and Diachronic Theory' in *Social Structure—Essays Presented to Radcliffe Brown*, p. 22.

[4] M. Fortes, op. cit., — M. Mead, 'Adolescence in Primitive and Modern Societies', in *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. by T. M. Newcombe and E. L. Hartley, New York, 1947.

[5] C. M. Fleming, *Adolescence*, London, 1949, pp. 240–2.

[6] Wayne Dennis, 'The Adolescent', in Carmichael, *Manual of Child Psychology*, pp. 636–7. He maintains that adolescence originally had a meaning which was biological, and not temporal or social. Hence studies concerning the psychology of adolescence must concern themselves with the effects of the biological process on the behaviour of the individual and their main aim therefore is an examination of a certain set of mental-physical correlations.

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882 functions and the impact of this standardization on the basic personality structure and social institutions.[1] In the light of this statement, the social disciplines connected with sexuality are relevant data, and according to Kardiner, of great significance in understanding the basic personality structure and in explaining partly the nature of primary institutions.

It seems that in Silwa the process of socialization is similar in many points to that amongst the Tallensi and the Samoans, with regard to the continuity of the inculcated social norms and the spheres of adult and child activities.[2] Unlike many Western societies, youth in Silwa do not express in their attitudes that sense of being torn between youthful autonomy and parental insistence on dependence. This problem does not seem to be disturbing to parents and would seem abhorrent to youth who like to demonstrate their allegiance to their family and clan. Even if such desire for autonomy is occasionally expressed by boys, who on disagreement with their parents desert them for some relatives in another village or go to town to work, this is considered to be the exception, and of course such a desertion can never be entertained by girls. The lack of such strong desire could be explained by the security the youth derives from his status in his family and his need to be married by his parents.

Psychologically, however, adolescent boys, and more so adolescent [157] girls, impressed the writer as being on the whole timid, apprehensive and withdrawn. These traits stand out more clearly if compared with children's groups. Attitudes of initiative, self-assertion and drive seem to be the exception in adolescent behaviour.[3] In attempting to account for such general characteristics, the writer does not claim them to be the negative phase of the adolescent stage. He attributes their striking appearance to the cumulative effect of the severe social disciplines, and especially those connected with sex. The maturing of sex functions at this stage is noted [831] with great embarrassment, shame and feeling of guilt by adolescents. As mentioned before, complete hush and excessive secrecy prevails over sexual matters among adolescents as well as adults. This seems to contrast sharply with free bodily gratification given to the infants. There is no word for masturbation in the villagers' dialect. Sexual pleasure of any kind outside the marriage tie is condemned by the text of the Koran, as mentioned earlier.

[834] Manifestations of this excessive repression and fear of sex are obvious in the veiling of adolescent girls and women and the hiding of the breast

[1] Richard T. Sollinberger, 'The Concept of Adolescence', in *The Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 36, 1939, pp. 600–1. A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*.

[2] For adolescence and puberty as treated in different societies, see also Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Chapter II.

[3] This is the writer's general impression and could only be substantiated by comprehensive recording of the behaviour of adolescents. According to Fortes, however, 'for most problems of social anthropology, variations are of minor importance as compared with the "typical". For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance.' *Patterns of Culture*, p. 8.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

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solid round band, or of silver or gold. The ornaments of the less wealthy peasants are usually made of cheap materials, though some women may be lucky enough to possess one gold or silver bracelet. 301

In some parts of Egypt, at any rate, the unmarried girl is not supposed to wear many bracelets at once, and her ornaments generally are not so numerous or so massive as those of the married woman. However, when she is anxious to marry she will somewhat overload herself with jewellery, cheap or otherwise, and, not content with her ear- and nose-rings and her somewhat massive necklace, she often hangs gold, silver, or brass ornaments from the kerchief which she ties round her head, the latter ornaments being attached in such a way that they hang over her forehead. 554 [882] 301

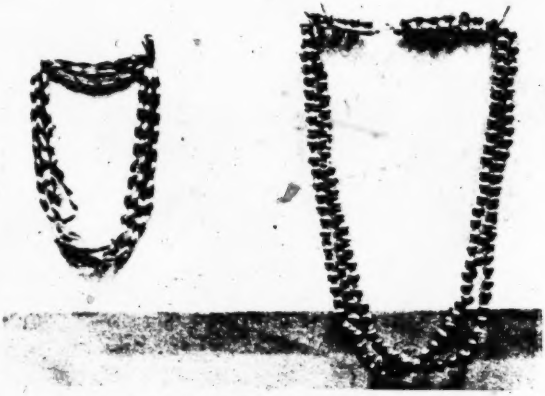

FIG. 19. MOURNING NECKLACES OF DARK BLUE BEADS

[765]

In some parts of Egypt a girl on becoming a bride may don such a number of glass bracelets of various colours that they completely cover both arms from wrist to elbow! Silver or white metal bracelets of particular design may also now be worn by her. I was told in Asyūṭ Province that unmarried girls are never allowed to wear this type of bracelet, which is thus a means of indicating social status.

A red heart-shaped ornament, attached either to a silver chain or to a necklace of red beads, is worn by women suffering from sheikh-possession.[1] A necklace of light blue beads, or even a single bead of this colour, is often worn as a charm against the evil eye. It will thus be seen from these two examples—and there are many others—that ornaments may have a utilitarian as well as a decorative value. 301 [789] [787]

[1] See Chapter XI.

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832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I [152] reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there [882] is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the 584 relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the 585 daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 492 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

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It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work. 594 858 [554]

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them. 241 857

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one. [312]

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'. 241 883 [868] [561]

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution. [262] [554]

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture. 241 885

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer. 561 581

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883 868 With regard to girls, there are no definite stages for female domestic tasks, but it is well known that the last stage of learning in a girl's home management skills is that connected with kneading and baking. The need for mothers to let their daughters take over their tasks is not so acute as with the fathers in relation to their sons. This is understandable, as the 554 son is socially the symbol of the family and his skills are to perpetuate the family pattern of life.

The following is a detailed duty sheet of the farm and home tasks 857 expected from both boys and girls at different ages:

Boys	*Girls*
FROM THREE TO SEVEN	
No serious tasks are expected till the age of five, whereupon they are required to work as messengers fetching goods from the shop, or running errands for their parents, uncles, etc. . . . fetching and taking things from and to other homes. [202] Children (between five and seven) are considered to be the best messengers, especially for invitations or for asking help from neighbours, and borrowing from them, being [312] less embarrassed, less inquisitive, and only repeating faithfully what is told to them.	Care of infants is one of the girl's main tasks at all ages, and starts as early as five, when she takes her younger sibling outside for play, or attends to him while mother is doing some domestic task.
In the absence of older sisters [372] he takes care of his younger brother or sister.	Runs errands like boys, especially for her mother or aunt, e.g. fetching fire, bringing food or other things that need to be hidden with the dangling parts of her head-cloth.
Towards the end of this period he [241] goes to the field with his older siblings, or with his father, riding behind him on donkey back or balanced in one of the camel's panniers.	Accompanies mother to the well or to the Nile with her small pot or tin, carried on her head and supported by her lifted arms.
Helps in carrying grass to the animals, scaring birds from the field, filling water-pots from the canal; ties or unties the cow, donkey and camel for his father or older brother.	Helps mother in bringing fuel to the oven or the fire, consisting of millet stems, tree branches, dry animal dung, etc.
On the whole for him this is a [868] stage of observation without allotted specific responsibilities. As the villagers put it, this is the period for children 'to be moistened with earth'.	Makes her own loaf with the last bit of dough which she eats after it is baked. This is a means of her initiation to domestic tasks by being 'moistened with the dough', and a reminder that 'kneading and baking' are one of the most important jobs for a girl.

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[Boys] **LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA** [GIRLS] 857

FROM SEVEN TO TWELVE[1]

Before the introduction of compulsory schooling and perennial irrigation, the specific responsibility for this period was irrigation—he still helps with it in the afternoon.

Collects leaves, clover, grass, and weeds for feeding the animals, takes animals to water, as tending animals is his main responsibility, whether at home or in the field.

Fetches drinking water on donkey-back.

Helps in harvesting.

Helps in digging land, breaking up clods with the hoe as an introduction to his use of implements.

Takes out and leads his blind or old father or grandfather.

Takes corn on donkey-back to the mill to be ground.

Tasks of previous period if no younger sibling in the family.

Establishment of tasks of preceding period, and helping mother in food preparation.

Fetches water from the Nile in a larger jar, as towards end of this period she can balance the filled jar on head without support of hands. [315] [481]

Takes midday meal to the field, and brings home dates and vegetables. [331]

Helps mother in attending to poultry and sheep, searches for straying sheep or chicken outside. [341]

Daughters of widowed women, or men who are not actually engaged in farming, gather fuel from along the roads. [368] [372]

Brings home 'clay' from the Nile or the field to help mother in building or repairing the oven, the pigeon-cote, the fireplace and the earthen store for seeds.

Carries corn on her head to the mill. [480]

FROM TWELVE TO SIXTEEN 883

Fertilizer-fetching is the main responsibility. Father is responsible for the work on the land, while son is responsible for carrying fertilizer from the hill.

Rears with special attention animals allocated to him: calf, small camel . . . as an investment for his marriage-payment.

Makes ropes by twisting fibre of the palm trunk.

'Sea' is one of her main responsibilities, which means water-fetching from Nile mainly at night. [241]

Occasionally takes women's washing as well as her own to be washed in the Nile [296]

Sieves flour, sews and cooks. [231]

Heats the oven, kneads and bakes. [422]

Hair-delousing.

Wool spinning and yarning. [515]

Makes plate and dish covers out of palm leaves, and dolls to ornament her future house. [283] [285]

Errand-going decreases to the minimum.

May get married before sixteen. [582]

[1] This is the period where compulsory schooling has interfered with the traditional activities of children. 871

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

863 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" - the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [594] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, where his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop. 594

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars. 857 462 [560] 883 462

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm. 261 [461] [778]

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values

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each other. But they think it below their dignity to play games or 'bounce about'. When the writer told a gathering of villagers about some of the games played by adults in the cities they denounced it as childish and undignified. One of them added in excuse, 'By the end of a day's work we are worn out; we just want to relax and not play'. 517

Looking at this question from the adult viewpoint, it is not incorrect to state that growing up in the village is a continuous process of weaning the child from play to the serious activities of 'a dignified man'. In infancy a child might respond truthfully to the father's question as to whether it had been playing, but as the child grows older, the fear of giving a direct answer increases, and an evasive reply replaces the earlier readiness to tell the truth. An adolescent would definitely deny playing, for fear of reproval or even punishment. Thus an adolescent who has imbibed 'adab' is one who has outgrown all play in 'open spaces', and has thus severed all links with the most characteristic feature of child-life. On the whole, by the age of sixteen for boys and thirteen for girls, they normally terminate their play life as one of the signs of their maturity. 857* [867] [883]

There is also the religious factor that contributes to the regarding of play as an undesirable activity. This religious motive is mainly due to the effect of the mystic tradition abominating play as an indulgence in pleasure which should be avoided. According to the mystic views, 'a pious man' should devote himself to worship and work; but play is 'lahw'—licentiousness. In the minds of the people the underlying concept of 'lahw' extends itself to other types of entertainment, e.g. the cinema, the theatre, playing or listening to music.[1] While it is true that the younger generation, in some part, go to the cinema whilst visiting the towns, the majority of the older generation regard cinema and theatre-going as 'haram'—something sinful. This 'Puritan' attitude towards play and entertainments, however, has no Koranic support; it is only based on the example of the rugged and restrained life of the 'pious ancestors'. 783 517

Looking at the organization of games, the second striking feature, after the marked dichotomy between the adult's and the child's world, is the almost complete segregation of both sexes, in games, after the age of six or seven at the latest. The sex distinction is so binding that it is unbecoming of a member of one sex to play the games of the other sex. Nevertheless, the writer has seen a group of girls in one of the back streets play the ball-game 'Awal-hawal'. Yet immediately they noticed a man approaching (not the writer), they all dispersed, only to resume play later. In contrast with the boys, ball-games with the girls are usually restricted to wall bouncing or catching games. There is no single game which is played by both sexes. 857* [526]

[1] This tradition is very similar to that of the Puritans in England as shown in the following quotation from the early eighteenth century: 'Play must be forbidden in all its forms. The children shall be instructed in this matter in such a way as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their hearts and minds from God . . . and work nothing but harm to their spiritual lives.'

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Chapter Nine

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

ADOLESCENCE as a stage of development in the individual's life assumes but little importance, and is unmarked by a ceremony or any other means of social recognition. By the age of thirteen or fourteen the child's maturing of sex organs is referred to as 'bulough—maturation' (literally the stage when one reaches a peak). Adolescent boys are sometimes referred to as unmarried men (azab), or 'he whose sweat has become odorous', or 'he unto whom life has entered' (khashu al 'aish). For the parents, adolescent boys and girls do not present any specific problems, except for the fact that they are approaching the marriageable age.

In the villagers' view, adolescence and marriage are inextricably connected. It is not unusual for girls to get married by the age of twelve and thirteen, in spite of the law which stipulates that this may not be effected before the age of sixteen. This happens without official registration, and the reading of the 'Fatiha' between the two parties is sufficient to sanction and validate the marriage. Nowadays, boys usually marry after eighteen, on finishing the requirements and examination connected with military conscription, and it is one of the youths' misgivings against conscription that it delays their marriage, or at least provides a pretext for their parents for such a delay.

According to our way of approach, it is appropriate here to discuss the dominant norms that are emphasized in the genetic development of the individual at this stage. Most of these norms are not new but they loom larger in this stage, while other norms are still imperceptibly reinforced.

The first of these social norms is the emphasis on industry and responsibility of the maturing boys and girls. By the age of twelve or thirteen, boys and girls are now, with few exceptions, out of school and Kuttab. They could be entrusted to work either in the fields or at home without parental supervision, thus becoming a decided economic asset. Participating in adult work, with full responsibility, provides the adolescents on their part with a secure position in the family.[1]

[1]For examples of such responsible tasks, see Chapter I.

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With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends. Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

[1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

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Summing up the first dominant norm during the adolescent stage, one finds that boys and girls accept responsibility for active work and are characterized by the elimination of play elements compared with childhood and submission to parental authority as an ennobling virtue.

By the age of sixteen or seventeen the adolescent boys toe the line of adults, who reluctantly allow children to play their games or tell stories, provided they are assured of their victory in due course. The age-group of adolescents is interested in real issues and happenings of the village, e.g. disputes, ceremonies, neighbours' gossip, the new camel or bull that so-and-so bought, things that their families sell or buy in the market, the times of sowing and harvesting. Even in their interest in stories, it is the Jiha type of story with its realistic touch, and those of life or miraculous feats of saints rather than the fables that interest them.

The attitudes towards sex represent the second norm that becomes dominant in the individual's life at this stage. It is true that sex segregation of children in play, the boys' abandoning of their earrings (while girls keep them), starts earlier, at the age of nine and ten years, but it is almost fully established by the age of twelve and thirteen.[1]

Sex organs now become pudenda and adolescents become careful about the way they sit or what they wear. The notion of shame (Ar) is primarily a word connoting sex disgrace or sexual infidelity. This is the first association that arises in the villager's mind, and has been extended to comprise 'every forbidden impropriety, from a trifling breach of etiquette to the most serious moral turpitude'.[2] The first real emotional feeling of what it means to bring 'ar' to one's family comes through the excessive shame connected with sex organs. Adolescent boys urinate out of sight, while the girls make use of a private room inside the house. Boys wear long pants, whereas girls wear a headcloth to cover part of their face and their breasts on passing by men.[3] For both, any conversation about sex is taboo, and they are forbidden to talk about it to their parents or to any grown-up. Chastity as a moral and religious ideal implies the avoidance of any stimulating pleasurable influence from the opposite sex, or talking about sex. Adolescent girls are not encouraged to look attractive for fear of tempting

Japanese rely on maximizing the restraints upon him. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 254. This generalization applies, on the whole, to the methods of socialization in Silwa.

[1] I noticed that some boys and girls in their free drawings used to draw a line between men and women in a wedding ceremony or a pilgrims' procession. In the Rorschach testing the contrast between the two sexes was expressed in phrases such as 'These are women wearing black and these are men wearing white' although there was nothing in the blot to match statements like this.

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures and Essays*, London, 1912, p. 156. This word 'ar is different from 'L'ar' or 'al'ard' as pronounced in Silwa which means 'protection' and is said to invoke the help of another person. See E. Westermarck, 'L'ar or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907.

[3] I was told that neither women nor adolescent girls wear any special clothes for menstruation.

[For examples, See Category 185 116, pp. 179-183 -- Analyst]

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882 883 [834] men. One woman told me that a girl who beautifies herself will find difficulty in marriage and will have no 'lamah' (halo) about her to please her husband when married.

During adolescence, however, the girl would be prepared for marriage 882 304 [302] by tattooing her lower lip and by a special mode of hair style, distinguishable from the loose hanging hair of childhood. For tattooing the lip, a special woman is invited to prick the lip with a pack of needles smeared in black soot mixed with animal bile. The hair dressing of an adolescent girl and a woman is very much like that among the Sudanese women.[1] A special woman called 'mashata' plaits the hair into small tresses tightly covering the head. This style of hair makes a firm basis for fixing her [301] ornaments on marriage, which are usually composed of three golden disks (dinar, pl. dananeer) that dangle over the forehead, and a silver chain connected to the ends of the hair at the back.

883 539 533 It is during adolescence also that boys show the greatest interest in singing, and for this purpose they form the so-called 'circle of romance boys' (awlad al hawa). In these circles, held usually in summer, on festive occasions, weddings and circumcision, youths give vent to their new interest in love. They perform by standing in a circle with one taking the lead by singing a song while the other boys listen. On finishing, they repeat in chorus the last line again and again, clapping their hands rhythmically till the first singer or another youth starts another song. Some of these songs are composed extemporaneously, while others are old ones repeated. The following three examples are typical of the songs sung:

Ya bit ya um ghawaish,
khallaiti 'agli taish,
nassaitini al ma'aish,
Chorus: Wi dmoui 'al'ashik 'al khaddain.

O thou girl with bracelets,
thou hast rendered my mind crazy,
and hast made me neglect my work.
Chorus: And the tears of the lover are on the cheeks.

. . . . .

Rakbah min foag wasil,
tihki bil hasil,
mafeesh adab wasil.
Chorus: 'Ala annabi wahhid wi salli.

She is on the top (on the roof),
telling what has happened,
she has no politeness at all.
Chorus: Say God is one and pray for the Prophet.

[1] Cf. Sophie Zenovsky, 'Marriage Customs in Omdurman', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXVI, Part ii, 1945, p. 244.

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Wana jayi mna al Mas'aeed,
wi labis talat jalalaleeb,
wi batgallab baihin gilleeb.
Chorus: Gol la abouy in kunt tahwani, gol la abouy.

I was coming from al Masaeed (a neighbouring village)
wearing three garments
in which I was rolling, rolling.
Chorus: Tell my father if you love me, tell my father.

At this stage of adolescence, boys—especially those who have been to the Kuttab—begin to participate in mosque prayers and show intensified interest in religious practices. They go to Friday prayers, take part in the calling for prayers and the drawing of water from the mosque well for ablutions. A great number of youths also join the mystic order of 'Nakshabandia'; they are called 'Boys of the Path' (awlad attarik), and their headquarters is a room attached to the old mosque of the village. Members of the sect are expected to attend the night prayers ('isha) in the mosque, after which they congregate for reading and listening to mystic verses, followed by telling some of God's attributes silently several times. This is called 'the mystic routine' (ratib). Moreover, on certain occasions, these youths perform collectively the 'Zikr'. The performance of this mystic ritual involves mainly the repetitive uttering of some of God's attributes aloud and in unison. The leader of the 'Zikr', a blind man, stands in the middle of a circle, while youths, and sometimes with them a few married men, will be standing in a circle calling out together one of God's names, e.g. 'Merciful' (Raheem), while swaying their bodies. This repetition may go on for about a quarter of an hour or so, to be stopped by the leader who will recite some verses of saints or some 'mawwals'. While the boys are listening to this, they express their approval and admiration, and they may ask for another 'mawwal' from the reciter before they start chanting another of God's names. While those in the circle are repeatedly chanting a name of God, gradually getting into almost a state of ecstasy, the leader in the centre would be clapping his hands and stimulating his boys to carry on by more repetitive chanting. The following are two examples of 'mawwals' sung on such occasions:

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'Ajaby 'ala welaid fi zikr al-Ilah zawwad,
elif al-Jalalah, wib salaat annabi t'awwad.
'Ash gadr ma'ash la mal wa la hawwad,
wa la umru jalas yoam ma'ally galbahum sawwad,
lamma mat bayyan karamat la 'affan wa la dawwad.

I admire the boy who has indulged in mentioning God's name,
and accustomed himself to His Glorious name and to prayers for the Prophet,

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and lived all his time never deviating from the right path,
and never associating with those people whose hearts have been blackened.
When he died he showed signs of piety, and his body neither decayed, nor was attacked by worms.

. . . . .

Shams al giyama danat gum ya mureed safir,
gum jahhiz azzad min gabl al-miaad safir,
wi gabbad al-arwah daiman al-'ibad safir,
as-shaib wiyya as-sigam ju lak ya fata mursal.
wi likul umnah ata liha nabi mursal,
ata Jibril bil burag li annabi mursal.

The sun of resurrection is approaching, a warning for departure.
Prepare yourself before the hour comes.
The seizer of souls is always apparent and about.
Grey hairs and sickness are messengers for you.
For every nation there has been a messenger,
and Gabriel delivered God's message to Muhammad.

On some occasions these 'Boys of the Path' go to visit their 'brothers' in another village. On their approaching that village, the heralding of which would be by the visitors' chanting in unison popular verses and by beating on a small drum, the latter would walk out to receive them before they enter the village. They would offer them tea and dates and spend the rest of the night reciting verses or holding a 'zikr'.

Some of the adolescents and youths in the village do not take part in either the singing or mystic activities, for they are not encouraged to do so by their parents, and they are satisfied by only gathering in the neighbourhood for chatting. On asking some of these boys why they did not join in such activities, they replied that they wanted to attend to their livelihood, and as they usually felt tired through the day's work they could spare no time or effort for such activities.

It must be pointed out that it is not maintained here that interest in religious matters is a psychological consequence of puberty and adolescence, or that the attitude towards sex is being learnt only at this stage. Such norms as mentioned earlier are being imbibed gradually from childhood. With regard to religious matters, children start by learning about God's power at an early stage, even in their play and riddles. On going to the Kuttab they know how to recite the major Islamic creed, 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet', learn the obligation of fasting through the adult practice and through their own attempts to fast half a day, a day or more according to their capacity in imitation of adults. As far as sex norms are concerned, they begin to express themselves in separate play as early as the age of eight and nine years. But with the dawning of adolescence, the child finds himself awakened to the cumulative

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the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it. It will be shown in the next chapter how the role of the Kuttab has been seriously challenged by the modern system of schools.

In addition to the Kuttab, the village mystic order of Nakshabandia must be considered as an organized educational institution for adolescents and young men, where they enjoy comradeship of 'The Path' and learn religious and mystic practices, stories and verses.[1]

[1] See Chapter IX.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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97.

Good Friends.

539x 406 [231] [312]

Sāqye (sā'ye) is the name of the contrivance driven by oxen, for raising the water of the river or a well, to the fields. By means of a large, horizontal, wooden cog-wheel and a smaller, perpendicular one, a large wheel is turned round, which revolves on the same axle with the smaller cog-wheel. On this second, large wheel, hangs a long, endless chain of jars, which raise the water from below and pour it into a trench above. (Compare the illustration.) The peculiar groan and creak of the sāqyes belong as much to the landscape of the Nile Valley, as do the melancholy songs of the shādûf-workers.

883 539x [312] [462]

A youth comes to the sāqye and questions it as to whether the girls of the village have already been there to get water, as they do every morning. The old sāqye understands him and replies: "A pretty girl has been here" and tells how even the ox, inspired, declared: "For such pretty girls as this, I will work forever; as for the old women, let me alone!" To this day I can hear the bantering tone of the, "Dog's son of a steer!" which escaped one boy as another repeated to me this favorite song.

Ya sā'ye, yammû ṭāra,
waradet 'alēki-l-'adāra?
Waradet 'alēye ummû mandīl
wil-ka'b sēi el-ḫiyāre.

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● 883

5 *Wet-tōr ʾāl: Dauwarūni,*
amla li-sūd el-ʿiyūnī.
Win gat el-ʿagūz, baṭṭalūni,
taḥram ʿalēye-d-doāra.

"O sāqye with the huge wheel
Have the girls come down here to thee?"
[824] "One with a head-kerchief has come down to me,
[826] Whose heel is like a cucumber."
5 And the ox said: "Drive me around,
That I may fill for the 'black-eyed'.
If, however, the old one comes, then let me halt,
For then the turning is forbidden me."

4. The comparison of the sweetheart's heels with the tenderness of a cucumber, is a delightfully characteristic notion of the Egyptian peasant. Maḥmûd understood ka'b as "heel", but I should not fail to mention the opinion of Arabists, that a very similarly sounding word (ku'b), meaning "breast", is to be read here.

6. Namely: Fill the trench for the black-eyed girls, who come to draw water.

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enjoy the pleasure and prestige of 'mothers of children'. Thus in the same way, the girl, in relation to her mother, is not only considered as an economic asset but a means for getting more leisure and freedom from the pressure of work.

It is appropriate here to state the various activities which both boys and girls are expected to perform. Age and physical fitness determine the various tasks allotted to them.

In the case of boys, farm work is divided into three main categories, according to their ability to perform those duties independently. In the first stage, from seven to ten years, the boy is called 'hawwal', meaning that he can direct the water into the farm sections and is able to regulate by himself the process of irrigation. Twenty years ago, when the village was under basin irrigation, boys who used to attend to the turning of the water-wheel were called 'jaizar', but as there are very few water-wheels nowadays, this word is not commonly used in connection with this stage. Compulsory schooling for those who cannot evade it has made this job a part-time one.

From the age of twelve or thirteen boys are expected to undertake the conveying of fertilizer from the hills, and they are called at this stage 'marraga'—the bringers of 'marog'. They are trained by the age group that is immediately above them. A boy on his first 'hill ascent' to get the 'marog' must give the older boys with whom he is to be associated a present of wheat, bread and dates. If he does not fulfil this obligation, they usually, on their arrival at the 'marog' spot, undo the camel's reins and put them round the boy's face and neck, returning the camel empty to the boy's field. After fulfilling his obligation, they take him with them, and help him to learn the techniques of loading the camel and discovering the best kind of 'marog'.

At this stage also a boy starts tackling the 'shadoof' or as more commonly called in this district the 'ood'. If he can manipulate this instrument properly the boy is called 'awwad'. It is well established that a 'marrag' or an 'awwad' is almost synonymous to a good eater, and his request for food and the increase of frequency of meals and their quantity are usually complied with, as a recognition of his tangible economic contribution.

The third stage sets in by the appearance of the first traces of the boy's moustache, when he becomes a fully-fledged farmer, 'nabbar' or a 'fellah', from the age of seventeen onwards. The hallmark of this stage is for the boy to be allowed to sow the seeds, and to distribute fertilizer on the farm, as these are supposed to be the most skilful tasks in agriculture.

These three economic stages coincide almost with the three categories of the social grouping in the village, namely the group of youngsters, adolescents or non-married men, and fully-fledged men. One of the important qualifications for a grown-up marriageable youth is his ability to perform the various stages of cultivation, graduating, as it were, by becoming a competent farmer, able to sow the seeds and distribute the fertilizer.

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

[Boys]

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

[GIRLS]

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

863 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a [264] handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" - the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of [492] our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'marrag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my [264] midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate [264] the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends [574] after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

867 In this way the child experiences the processes of kinship, entering gradually widening circles of people with concomitant responsibilities and meanings. About the age of seven, for instance, kinship sentiment means running errands for close relatives, borrowing things, helping in carrying presents and gifts for them, and so forth. A child runs errands for his [603] paternal and maternal uncles and grandfathers whether they live with the [604] father or not, whether they are on good terms or not. Beyond these categories of kinship, the child is not compelled to run errands for other relatives who are not in harmony with his parents, on pain of punishment. Through the disciplinary powers of the uncle and the parent's family in general, the child finds himself more drawn towards his mother's people whom he usually goes to visit with his mother, because, as mentioned earlier, he finds them less censorious than paternal relatives. These visits to the maternal relatives are more frequent in the case of adolescent boys who can enjoy a relaxing and more genial relationship in their leisure time at night. As they grow older, kinship for boys and girls means help and assistance on ceremonial events of the extended family and the clan. [601] It is significant to notice that children use only eight terms of address: father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. The last four categories of uncle and aunt are only used when those addressed are married; otherwise they are addressed merely by their [184] first names. In Silwa, unlike many other rural areas in the province of Kena, boys and girls tend, on the whole, to drop these four categories of kinship address after their marriage and usually call their uncles and aunts by their first names. It seems that after marriage boys and girls attain a [885] certain amount of social independence, and thus they do not address [301] uncles and aunts by kinship titles in the same way as they do not address the latter if they are not married, or if the age difference is slight. The recognition of blood relation, however, is usually used as a test for young children by their elders: one might hear an elder questioning a younger, 'Who is your uncle? Who is your cousin? Where do they live? Whom do you prefer?' and so on. The adolescents have a few puzzles depending on [594] kinship terms, and division of inheritance, the solution of which lies in the understanding of a linguistic twist, or a pun.[1]

The child's recognition of the importance of his family and his identification with it is acquired at a very early stage of his development. The child [195] usually talks in the first person plural, by saying 'our donkey, our camel'. In fact, it is preferable to use the plural pronoun rather than the singular, as it is considered to be modest and less presumptuous. This identification with the family is also evidenced by the fact that in children's swearing, and in that of the adults for that matter, the curse is directed towards the father, the mother, the family, or to one's origin (seed). It is very seldom indeed that a curse refers directly to the child or the person addressed. When children are praised by visitors, such praise is couched in terms such

[1] See Appendix VII for boys' riddles.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

With this increasing share of responsibility, boys enjoy a certain amount of freedom as compared with their period of childhood. They are not exposed to the physical punishment which is frequently administered during childhood, except, of course, for grave offences such as stealing or neglect of their work. They are also entitled to move about freely and to mix with their age-mates without having to account for their absence at night to their parents. They can sleep outside the house in the open air in summer, or in the guest house in winter, or go to enjoy themselves at a wedding or any other ceremony.

Yet, while youths enjoy more freedom of movement concomitant with their assumed responsibilities, girls find their freedom more restricted and become more confined to the house and the neighbourhood. These restrictions are partly because their work is more concentrated in the house, and partly 'because their breasts have grown', a sign of embarrassment and shame which the girls should not be encouraged to display.

Both boys and girls, however, are expected to give up their childish play and games. One can observe groups of adolescents at night sitting at a corner of the street or in an open space, talking or telling stories or riddles, while the group of younger boys are noisily at their games. If girls still make dolls at this stage, they are not those made of maize straw for play, but those to decorate their future houses, and are made of cloth.

Although the boys' freedom is in some ways less restricted than that of the girls, it does not mean that it is considerably increased. Both still have to maintain their social space and to observe the social norms of dominance-submission which govern the pattern of relationship between old and young; both have to adhere to rules governing sex behaviour and sex dichotomy as will be shown later. On the whole the arc of growing up seems to be similar to that in Japan, represented as a curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the very old. Social disciplines are imposed after infancy, reaching the lowest point in the curve of freedom just before marriage, whereupon it gradually ascends. Marriage gives the individual a certain amount of freedom which gradually increases by having children, and later on by possessing property after the death of the father. On the other hand, old age, like infancy, is unhampered by some restrictions connected with etiquette, sexual shame, breaking wind, or covering the face—in the case of women. Old women, for instance, can go out wearing one black garment similar to children, and unlike adolescent girls, who usually wear two pieces. Old men are allowed to indulge in singing, which is different from that of the adolescents and which is called 'nameem' or 'wawat'. Children are allowed to amuse themselves by mimicking or imitating old people and earn admiration from their parents or other boys for such imitation.[1]

[1] Talking about the 'arc of life' in Japan, Ruth Benedict contrasts it with the 'American arc of life'. In the latter case, to secure the individual's energetic participation in life, the Americans rely on increasing his freedom of choice during adolescence, while the

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

1:Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole. 595

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige. 585 83 562 [123]

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3] 885 591 [593]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons. [833]

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32. [586]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

F 585 789 F 586

common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥīn*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

F [842] F [341] [842] F 887 586

FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife "I divorce you" three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

791 832 [291] 431 152 584

241 wheel carrying a long chain of pots which move mouth down-
312 ward into the water to fill, and then tip out their water into the channel as they arrive at the top. The *saqia* and the Archimedean screw have been continuously in use since the times of the Ptolemies.

[471 A *saqia*, costing as it does from L.E. 10 to L.E. 20,
476] according to its depth, is often the common property of several families. Each family in turn brings its own beast to draw water, and the work goes on without any break. One feddan can be irrigated in this way in 24 hours, and one *saqia* can supply five feddans.

The fellah's task is to goad the animal, to watch the turning of the wheel and the flow of water, and to avoid wastage on the way to the field, which may be anything up to three furlongs away. Usually an old man or a child is
[887 left in charge, and as the ungreased wheels continue their
857] ceaseless groaning, the child hums for joy at every movement he makes.

The *saqia*, with variations such as the *taboot* or water-wheel, is found in its thousands all over Egypt. Under the name of *noria* it is used by peasants in Syria, North Africa, Spain, Italy and Greece.

It is clear that the business of watering makes very great demands on the fellah's energy and endurance. Yet he is not satisfied with the strict minimum, and is often accused of giving the soil too much water.

[242] He does not understand that frequent and copious water-ing raises the underground water-level, and that when this reaches four feet below the surface it stifles the roots and makes the plants turn yellow. He only knows the evil effects of drought. So when his turn comes he never wastes a moment, but gives his crop as much water as he can. To him, lack of water means a failure or at least a low crop; and that means poverty. There is no question that innumerable troubles and anxieties beset the fellah in his efforts to get the water which he needs for his little plot. The over-
[656] seers of irrigation in the provinces and the watchmen whose duty it is to see to the opening of sluices often disregard the orders and regulations which assure a just supply. In this matter favouritism, injustice and even personal spite are often indulged in with impunity.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (**), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 C F [292 505] C F [152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F [782] C F [265 443 764]

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them. 533 [114]

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they [86] 461 533

[1]) According to Maḥmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women. [887]

[2]) That this claim is recognized outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

613 574 during the month of Ramadan, when families co-operate in providing the 'Koran reciter' as well as other guests with tea and food.

Identification with the clan sentiment shows itself in cases of murder, 613 where the clans of both the murderer and the murdered are involved. It is 682 the obligation of the father, son, brother, uncle or paternal cousin to call 627 for vengeance and for the clan to support him, either by claiming compensation (which, however, is seldom accepted if the claim is acknowledged) [779] or by counter-murder, as the Koran ordains that murder should be punished with murder. The two clans through the mediation of another clan have to settle the dispute by deciding the compensation, called 'dia'.

This is no Durkheimian merging of the individual into the group. It is 156 simply a statement of the compelling moral law that the individual, to be in line with the group, should express group-sympathy; if the group is angry, he should be angry, if it is insulted, he must feel that he is insulted.

This pattern of social structure does not apply merely to the Silwa com- 182 munity and the G'afra, but applies in varying degrees to the whole province of Aswan, and many other provinces that are known to the writer in Upper Egypt. In all this, the bond of common descent and family connections is one of the strongest factors as well as the most socially effective force in the social structure.

561 The village could also be classified into social groups on the basis of age. From the standpoint of age there are three broad social groupings. The first is referred to as 'youngsters' (jahhal), including all boys and girls up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. The second is the unmarried group (fityan), and the third is represented by the married adults, referred to as 'men or women'.

In public there is no free mixing between these three categories as it is considered 'impolite' for a youngster to sit with men, for example, and the converse would be shameful. Youngsters can only be seen in an adult gathering serving tea, or holding the ablution laver and ewer, or as [291] messengers. In the case of young boys, they are marked by their head cap, while unmarried boys wear a turban, and the men besides a turban wear a 'tob' which is a black outer garment, and usually carry a stick or a stave.

Apart from segregation and dress, the age criterion shows itself in out- 561 ward behaviour, by considering the older people as equivalent to the 888 paternal uncle, or as fathers, or grandfathers if they are very old. Often older people are addressed by the kinship term 'Ammy' (O my paternal uncle), especially if one wants to be 'polite'. If one does not use the kinship [576] term one has to address the older person by the title 'Sheikh' preceding his first name.

Sex is another criterion for two definite social groups: the world of men, 562 and the world of women. In this community it is unthinkable to have free mixing between the two worlds, or that a thing done by one sex can also be done by a member of the other sex. Men have their scope of activities either in the fields or outside the compound, the women are mainly con-

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

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He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is 142
about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (")

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in [141]
Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'îdi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his 302
hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets [888]
his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered [291]
into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the 302
body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes 304
the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by 463
a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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again appear, and the mourning kerchief is replaced by one of brighter hue. Should a woman do this before her second husband is secured the whole village knows that she is anxious to marry again. 765 589 302

Women, especially when the hair begins to turn grey, often dye it with *henna*, which stains it a bright red. This may be done by a woman who, wishing to obtain another husband, endeavours to obliterate the signs of advancing years. One day when visiting a village where I have often stayed for many weeks at a time I saw an old crone performing her toilet on the roof of her house. She was combing out her very scanty locks, which were dyed a bright red. Unfortunately, she had not been altogether successful with her hair-tinting, for considerable patches of white hair were still plainly visible. I asked a woman friend of mine, in whose house I was sitting, if the old woman wanted to marry again. She laughed, and said that she believed that this was so! I never heard that she met with any sort of success in that direction! 302 587

The men either have their hair cut quite short, or else they have the head shaved altogether. Some of them, however, leave one lock of hair at the back of the head, allowing it to grow quite long, even though the rest of the head may be closely shaved. One man told me that he wore this lock of hair so that when he died the men who washed him might not have to touch his head, but could hold it by this lock. I gathered that he thought that it would defile him if they caught hold of his head, but I am not sure about this point. My brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, tells me that a man told him that the object of the lock was to prevent those who washed a corpse from raising the head by putting a hand into the mouth and so possibly defiling the dead. 302 764

The men usually shave all the hair off the face, except the moustache. Old men, however, frequently allow the beard to grow, as it is looked upon as a mark of honour at that time of life. Most of the body hair of both sexes is shaved off, to ensure ceremonial purity. 302 888

A child often has the hair shaved off just above the forehead. In some parts of Egypt this is considered to be a good thing for the eyes, as it is believed that the hair growing on that part of the head is injurious to the eyesight when the child is very young. The shaven portion is often covered with *henna*. Another special 302 [826]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

595 is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows
[831] only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If
[594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves,
[264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and
596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the
888 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being
[842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional
165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule,
[587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.